

LIFE
OF
CHARLES BRADLAUGH

MACKAY



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1888

L I F E

OF

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.

BY

CHARLES R. MACKAY.

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*Who, in the secret, deals in stocks secure,
And cheats the unknowing widow and the poor.—POPE.*

*And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave
up the ghost.—ACTS V. 5.*

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1888.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

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WHEN the subject of this Memoir heard of its preparation, and was questioned in regard to it, he replied in his journal that no "authorised" version of his life was in the press. If this sketch have any special value, it may be found to lie in the fact that it is not "authorised," as all previous biographies or *auto*-biographies of Mr Bradlaugh have been, but perfectly discriminating, absolutely fearless, and thoroughly independent. Whatever may be the faults of the performance I now place before the public, I have nought extenuated and nought set down in malice. I never met Mr Bradlaugh in my life, and, for aught I know, he is unaware even of the existence of such a person as myself. I state

this in evidence that I simply discharge what has appeared to me a public duty, having no private grudge to exploit and no personal animosity to gratify. If Mr Bradlaugh be averse to having a true statement of his career placed before the public, that is his affair, not mine. I am more careful of the interests of truth than of the good graces of the subject of my Memoir.

Amongst those to whom I have to acknowledge indebtedness, directly or indirectly, are the following:—Mr Merriman, Mr Henry Grant, Mr Morrison Davidson, “Saladin,” Rev. Brewin Grant, Mr W. H. Johnson, Mr William Maccall, Mr Charles Watts, “Lara,” Rev. Rowland Young, Mr James Martin, Mrs Charles Watts, Rev. Dr Sexton, Miss Edith Saville, Mr G. W. Foote, Mr G. J. Holyoake, “B. V,” and Joseph Barker.

C. R. M.

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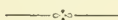
- Page 1, line 5, for *underly* read *underlie*.
Page 3, line 2, after *asserts* add *of*.
Page 5, line 5, for *agapemoni* read *agapemone*.
Page 27, line 13, for *he* read *be*.
Page 65, line 18, for *Bentick* read *Bentinck*.
Page 90, line 23, for *Cour* read *Court*.
Page 169, line 22, for *san-scasser* read *sans casser*.
Page 275, line 27, for *he* read *she*.
Page 298, line 29, for *l* read *gaol*.
Page 312, line 24, for *eady* read *ready*.

to represent the electors of Nottingham in the Commons of England, it will help to a better understanding of the principles which underly modern Democracy, if I trace the germ of the party organisation whose exponent has now become one of the political factors of the age. Mr Bradlaugh is the chief of a sect which has, in certain districts, become a living force, capable of influencing large masses of the people to insist upon the individuality of an idea which is incarnated in one who, commencing life as a Demagogue, lives on in the hope of ending it as a Cabinet Minister. The greatest art of the agitator

L I F E

OF

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.



INTRODUCTORY.

The Historical Schools of English Frcethought, and their Personal Representatives, from Thomas Hobbes to John Stuart Mill, and from Charles Blount to Charles Bradlaugh.

BEFORE entering into a record of the career of the honourable gentleman who has been several times chosen to represent the electors of Northampton in the Commons of England, it will help to a better understanding of the principles which underly modern Democracy, if I trace the germ of the party organisation whose exponent has now become one of the political factors of the age. Mr Bradlaugh is the chief of a sect which has, in certain districts, become a living force, capable of influencing large masses of the people to insist upon the individuality of an idea which is incarnated in one who, commencing life as a Demagogue, lives on in the hope of ending it as a Cabinet Minister. The greatest art of the agitator

is to conquer the intellect of a few leading disciples, and to make them his willing slaves. The people of Northampton having become convinced that Mr Bradlaugh was ignored by those who dispense the favours of the Crown, resolved to fight the Crown by sending Mr Bradlaugh to Parliament as their champion. When he was rejected, they took upon themselves his quarrel, as a century ago did the electors of Middlesex after John Wilkes had been again and again refused the privilege of taking his seat at Westminster. It was merely the old story of history repeating itself, and, possibly, the historic conflict of the last century may find a resemblance in our own time which may point a moral that there is a great deal of human nature in men—especially in politicians. John Wilkes was as licentious in fact as Charles Bradlaugh is in theory. In the most convivial orgies of the hero of “Wilkes and Liberty,” the cross-eyed Demagogue afterwards protested to King George that, in his own person, he was never a “Wilkite.” In like manner Mr Bradlaugh, who has enjoyed all the intoxication which popularity can give, is careful to repudiate the imputation of being a “Bradlaughite.” John Wilkes built his greatness upon the mob, but when he had reached the summit of his ambition he kicked away the ladder by which he had climbed to power, and he died a courtier and a place-man.

It is too early to predicate the end of Mr Bradlaugh, but the Socialists who once worshipped at his shrine

now denounce him as a renegade; while *Reynolds* openly asserts him that he is a "turn-coat." But this is only the record of a class whose historic prototype was Cleon; and the race will not end with "Iconoclast." As long as Mr Bradlaugh was the mere representative of a party whose organisation has hitherto always consisted of the slow, changing atoms of a residuum left by speculative enthusiasts, who prefer the arts of political denunciation to intellectual development, the opinions of this gentleman, either in religion or politics, were immaterial; but the case assumed another aspect when Mr Bradlaugh progressed in social strength beyond the mere tribune whose stentorian eloquence impressed the fickle mob with his views. Now, however, when casting away the slough of his Republican skin, he, through his most intimate friends, boldly asserts his right to the reversion of a seat in a Liberal Cabinet—the question of his competency assumes another form. Very few years have passed since Mr Bradlaugh delivered his celebrated orations on the "Impeachment of the House of Brunswick." He then uttered no veiled threats against the next successor to the English throne, and he did his best to sow sedition, by teaching the doctrine that the mere rescinding of the "Act of Settlement" would effectually dispense with the rights of sovereignty of the House of Hanover. There is now, however, as great a change passing over the public utterances of the Honourable Member for Northampton as there was in the case of

John Wilkes, when he emerged from his chrysalis rôle of patriot, to gravitate into a full-blown placeman. Whatever may be the future rank of the anti-Christian Member for Northampton, it cannot but be instructive to glance at the development of the party whose acknowledged representative leader he claims to be,—and we may calculate from the experiences of the past the problem of his further development in the near future.

As the exponent of British Atheism, Mr Bradlaugh occupies a unique position in Parliament. He is the field-marshal of a party which, for two and a-half centuries, has, with its leaders, been in historic revolt against the governing statesmen of Great Britain. Although its individual adherents have numbered the most daring politicians and thinkers of their time—men and women who have sacrificed everything which the world holds dear for their opinions—yet, while boasting of an ubiquitous organisation controlling public opinion, they are still without a meeting-place superior to that of the poorest denomination of Christians. In the entire British Empire they cannot pride themselves on being possessed of a hall where a refined audience would not feel ashamed to congregate. The society which boasts of the services of Mr Bradlaugh worships in an Atheistic cathedral, dignified by the title of the “Hall of Science,”—a building which has more the appearance of a barn than of an assembly-room. Its revenues are derived from the sale of liquors in a “Club,” to which is added a Dancing Academy,

where males are admitted without the formality of an introduction, and females attend without chaperones; while within the hall is a bookstall bestrewn with "literature," recommending the grossest sexual immorality. It was at this agapemoni that Mr Bradlaugh officiated as high priest before he became a power in the House of Commons. His present position has been achieved solely through following the traditions of his political and theological ancestors. It is, however, a remarkable fact that in the Freethought party there are now, as there has been from time immemorial, two sections which have carried on an internecine struggle through ten generations of polemic warfare. Of these two sections, one has obtained all the credit of influencing public opinion, while the other has accomplished the real work of advancing Thought from the fetters of ecclesiastical bondage.

Mr Bradlaugh has vaulted into Parliament upon a reputation gained, to a large extent, by extreme advocates who have given utterance to ideas which have caused much trouble to orthodox champions to explain away. The Honourable Member has spent his political and theological life in slaying the slain. He has, in himself, gone forth to the world as the personification of the Freethought party, and as such has arrogated claims of iconoclastic opposition to the Christian Religion, as well as boasted of a prowess over controversialists whose intellectual credentials would be impugned by an educated clergy. He has,

from his youth, taken it as an axiom of undoubted fact that there was no freedom of thought in theology, except that which was allied to offensive descriptions of biblical examples, and that there could be no independence in politics, except when couched in insults to those who had social advantages over his own adherents. This is a mistake which has not been confined to Secularists, and it would be well if it were possible to convince the unthinking public that every age possesses its own political and religious fashions, which are fair marks for ridicule and argument; but that underneath all the follies of political and religious parties of a bygone age, there was then as much independence of Thought as exists now, even if expressed in a different style. The writings of Chaucer and the poems of Piers the Ploughman show that the clergy were satirised as freely in the English Middle Ages as in the Agnostic propaganda of the nineteenth century. The rebellions of Wat Tyler, Jack Cade, and Ket the Tanner, all demonstrate that the art of organising political agitations did not originate with modern Reformers in Hyde Park. It is even doubtful if, comparatively, there is more Freethought in existence now than when Bishop Grostête defied the Pope, or when Wickliff appealed to the common sense of the Farm Labourers of *his* day. Amongst politicians, few will be able to demonstrate that in the Burgess Guilds of Plantagenet, Tudor, or Stuart the people had fewer popular rights than are to be found amongst the Household Suffrage Electorate of

the Victorian Age. Even in the most bigoted periods of the Middle Ages, when Faith dominated Kings, we have records of Thinkers who dared to express their heterodox ideas in no uncertain voice. If the history of the first doubt is traced in theological criticism, we shall have to seek it, if not amongst the traditions of the Apostles, in the controversies of the earliest Christians. With all our cosmopolitan breadth of creed, we have not advanced any further in theological diversion than at the time when Constantine superseded the priests who worshipped in the temples of Jupiter; and Freethought, the School which Mr Bradlaugh alleges to have sprung, Minerva-like, from the brains of English Sceptics, existed prior to the establishment of Christianity in England. Political freedom, which is frequently alleged by popular politicians to have arisen from the conflicts of modern Radicals, existed before the British constitution was evolved from the textbook of Saxon battle-axes and Norman swords. Liberty in England is the most ancient of all her possessions. It is tyranny which is modern, and it is the just and necessary condition of a people who have neglected rights which they inherited with their breath.

The party of which Mr Bradlaugh is chief is composed of men who, from their want of education, are incapable of deciphering the teachings of history. They base their claim to be dealt with as a political motor upon the simple fact that they are the extreme advocates of an extreme policy. Their most strenuous

opponents are men with equally advanced ideas, but who have not separated themselves from the right to stand within the ranks of their fellowmen. Of the two Schools of English Freethought, one is composed of Thinkers who keep in touch with the intellectual development of their age, even if considerably in advance of its teachings, and who, like the Ritualists in the Established Church, have preferred to mould its formula rather than to secede from the main body, and be left outside its influence. The other School, which worships at the footstool of the Honourable Member for Northampton, asserts that it stands outside of every party, only to find that it is ignored, except when its co-operation is required on a common platform for election purposes. This is clearly shown in the distinguishing characteristics of the two modern organs of popular Freethought. The *National Reformer* is the representative organ of that particular cult which adds the freedom of the Tavern to the mysteries of a Malthusianism which would have horrified Malthus; while the *Secular Review*, under the editorship of "Saladin," is a journal written by scholars for gentlemen, who, whether working in a College Library or studying Mental Science in the limited intervals of leisure which the artisan enjoys, alike consider blasphemy an outrage upon the moral sense of the public, irrespective of its vulgarity as an obsolete weapon of intellectual warfare.

It is interesting, to a political observer, to study

the lineal descent of the two Schools of Freethought in their origin, and to witness the culmination of one of them in the apotheosis of Mr Bradlaugh, M.P. This gentleman has performed the drama of "Wilkes and Liberty," which he has adapted with the war-cry of "Bradlaugh for Northampton," so as to secure an historical continuity of a farce played in two centuries, the hero in each case being the advocate of opinions in Politics, Theology, and Morals which were obnoxious to the public, but were tolerated because it was supposed that, in some way or other, either Wilkes or Bradlaugh was fighting in defence of Freedom.

The English Freethinker once had a terrible reputation, but he has always existed, and there is not a single sect which has sprung from the womb of the Protestant Reformation but has had specimens of the genus which, long prior to the advent of Luther, procreated and brought forth into the world its Rabelaisian gibes under the protection of the Scarlet Hat of a Cardinal to the discomfiture of the Mitred Bishop, whose sacerdotal functions durst not aspire to that ridicule which Cæsar Borgia knew so well how to use to keep the churchmen in order. The mistake made by the masses in our time arises from the want of knowledge of what has taken place in the past. The idea is prevalent that Mr Bradlaugh is the founder of Freethought. Those who are acquainted with the metaphysical controversies which have occupied so large a portion in our libraries, can tell a different story.

I need not recount many names, but I will mention a few. Amongst the men who set the fashion in religious doubt, Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, was the one who first distinctly diverged from Sectarian Christianity. Lord Herbert was one of the earliest of our speculative Deists. If his works had to appear now, the author would be considered an advanced Unitarian, with a tinge of Spiritualism. Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, the father of English Freethought, was only the mere antitype of John Stuart Mill. Amongst the religious world the author of "Leviathan" was looked upon with the same horror, as that with which, until recently, Mr Bradlaugh was regarded. He taught nothing new. He simply followed the Baconian induction which had been in use two thousand years before Bacon was born. Hobbes created a school which sneered at the clergy and formulated arguments by which the Restoration was enabled to crush theological recalcitrants. He was protected by the "Merry Monarch," who boasted that he kept him as a tame bear for the purpose of blooding the young dogs of the clergy. John Locke was the successor of Thomas Hobbes. His Essay on the "Human Understanding," popularised the method of Hobbes, and it is still a text-book of Mental Science. Locke had a reputation for piety of which Hobbes was destitute, and upon the system of Locke the theories of Scotch and German metaphysicians were founded. These ultimately produced the School

of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and modern Scientists, with which the leading idea is the ignoring of supernaturalism. With them religion is assumed to be an element of human nature, and theology is noted as an excrescence of the imagination, distorted by creeds which require to be discarded in all calculations of speculative inquiries. Hence the school of modern thinkers exists upon a positive basis, which turns the flank of clerical criticism without personal contact, or theological odium. The party represented by Mr Bradlaugh, on the contrary, carries out the theory that Freethought is inimical to the ordinary courtesies of life. In this view Mr Bradlaugh and his *National Reformer* fitly represent the epoch of Thought which existed at the time of the Restoration, when "Free-thinker" was only another term for one who satirised the clergy and ridiculed the Bible.

Contemporary with John Locke was a scion of the House of Blount, who, with Charles Gildon, issued numerous tractates upon the Hebrew Theology, which he diversified with political quarrels between the rival candidates for the English throne. These ephemera were collected and published under the title of the "Oracles of Reason"—a title which was utilised one hundred and fifty years afterwards by Mr Charles Southwell. Gildon was the friend of Charles Blount, who, in the prehistoric days of the agitation for marriage with a deceased wife's sister, committed suicide because the Church placed its ban on the nuptials he desired.

Gildon, after his recantation, lived long enough to be placed in the pillory of Pope's "Dunciad." After Blount was Lord Shaftesbury, whose "Characteristics," embodying the theory that "Ridicule was a test of Truth," served to popularise the right of dissent from Christianity, a principle which the Independents and Nonconformists had limited to dissenting from the Establishment. Contemporary with the latter was John Toland. He was the first *esprit fort* who lifted the gauntlet of defiance against the opinions of the religious world. His pamphlets were sold in sufficient numbers to create a sensation both in England and in Ireland. Toland was considered the originator of a new sect which was thought to savour more of political Anabaptism than Deism. Those who believed in the new prophet announced him as a modern Mahomet, destined to found a new religion; and while his books were burned by the common hangman, he still had defenders, in the coffee-houses, who magnified his courage and disseminated his arguments. It was not till 1712 that even the name of "Freethinker," as a distinct sect or schism, was known in English history. The author who invented the name was Anthony Collins, a friend of John Locke. In the books he wrote he expressly urged the right of a man to think freely, and utter his thoughts without incurring the penalties of the jail, or the fear of the wrath of the Eternal. From the date of Anthony Collins' death we begin to hear of organised Free-

thought, but it was the Freethought of the scholar, and not that of the mob. So strong were the prejudices of the clergy against the writings of Anthony Collins that the literary remains of the author were kidnapped by an eminent bishop, who bribed a Grub Street hack to hand over the unpublished MSS. given to him by the widow of Collins to prepare for publication. The conduct of the bishop was, doubtless, considered to be an exceptionally clever pious fraud. Contemporary with Anthony Collins was Matthew Tyndal, and Chubb, who occupied the attention of the public with theological disputations. Their works are still exhumed by the student who wishes to ascertain the polemics of the earlier reigns of the House of Hanover. All of these authors were men who wrote for scholars. The first who wrote for the people was Thomas Woolston, who, about 1720, commenced to issue his attacks on the Gospels in language which appealed to the humorous side of the mob. Woolston's tracts created a reading section of the Free-thinkers which is yet in full swing at the tabernacle presided over by Mr Bradlaugh to-day.

It is noteworthy that the first trace of Infidelity in Scotland is a record of certain young men, who defied public morality at Ayr, by assembling in a public-house on a Sunday to read Woolston's "Discourses on Miracles." They outraged the feelings of the inhabitants by leaving their room at the hour when the kirk closed, for the purpose of ridiculing pious deacons

on their way home. Beyond the rabid blasphemy of the gutter, which delighted the gin shops, where Woolston's effusions were first read, the modern Freethinker of the "Hall of Science" has not advanced a single step. He has but changed his accompanying liquor, and added the "Club," so as to dispense with the publican's licence; while Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees" is represented by the modern Bible yclept "Sexual, Social, and Natural Religion,"—a work in which prostitution is set forth as a domestic virtue. Thomas Woolston's attacks upon the *literal* interpretation of the Gospels contain the germ of the satires of Voltaire, and they were incorporated (minus the wit, but with all the buffoonery) in the tracts issued by the modern Freethought propaganda. After Woolston's day an educated era intervened, in which Bolingbroke reigned over a negation, made respectable by his "First Philosophy," whose didactic morals survive in the poetic "Essay on Man," which was versified by Alexander Pope without his understanding its philosophic drift. For a half century Freethought became eminently respectable. Instead of attacking the authority of the Bible, Gibbon "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer," and so well did he succeed in his work that the "Decline and Fall" (with Christian annotations) is still a text-book in our colleges. At the close of Gibbon's career the cataclysm which overturned the balance of society appeared, and the French Revolution inaugurated the epoch which compelled scholars to look for disciples in

the ranks of the People. The reign of the Upper Classes in matters of opinion was at an end. The *régime* of the *Bourgeoisie* had commenced. The English reformers were a distinct class, who were first described as the "Swinish Multitude," which metaphor, within a century, passed through the gradations of "Unwashed," "The Mob;" and finally it has emerged into that of "The Masses" and "The People."

At a period when a temporary calm arose in the conflict of parties, when Pitt and Fox alike stood aghast at the boldness of Burke, who dared to "rat" from his party at the execution of Marie Antoinette, it was found that even his glittering eloquence was insufficient to stay the ebullitions which had arisen in the breasts of those who had looked across the English Channel for a ray of political light. The star of Fox was paling. Even the electors of Westminster were doubtful of the political divinity of the Whigs. Corresponding Societies sprung up like magic, and attempts were made to put them down by ruthless law. England was quivering in the volcanic womb of an incipient revolution, when a pamphlet appeared on the "Rights of Man," written by a renegade Quaker who has assisted in the moulding of two Empires. When Thomas Paine crossed the Atlantic, he found the Continentals undecided as to whether they were Rebels or Patriots. He had landed there big with ideas of English Freedom, and, in his own incisive way, he told the American Patriots the course

they ought to pursue. They begged this Quaker emigrant to write a book, which should render their position secure against the headsman's block and the hangman's rope, should King George and Lord North succeed in levying Excise duties in Boston harbour. In ten days "Common Sense" appeared, which achieved a larger circulation than that of any other political tract ever previously published. It was not the arguments alone which made it a political gospel to an eager people; although, when it ridiculed the idea of three millions of persons rushing down to the seashore every time a ship arrived from London, in order to ascertain what amount of Liberty King George was going to give them, the ludicrous absurdity of the simile so struck their fancy that it did not require the pellucid clearness of his style to satisfy their intellects as to which was the proper course to pursue. The "Common Sense" pamphlet of Thomas Paine accomplished more in the way of deciding the Americans to declare their independence than all the arguments of Jefferson and Patrick Henry. Had this work not appeared at that exact date, it is exceedingly probable that the United States of America would, like Canada, have remained a dependency of the British Crown. At the close of the Revolutionary War Thomas Paine threw himself into the current of English Politics. For the first time in our political struggles, an appeal was made to the people in the *language* which the people understood. The "Rights of Man" became the text-book which has since formed

the basis upon which all the political struggles of this century have been formulated. At a period in natural history when "Church and King" was the great party cry of our country, Thomas Paine was burnt in effigy, with the "Rights of Man" around his neck, in every parish in England, under the superintendence of the lord of the manor and the village parson. The author went to Paris, and narrowly escaped the guillotine. While awaiting the advent of the tumbrel of "Monsieur de Paris," he amused himself with composing the "Age of Reason"—a work which is now considered by most clergymen of the Church of England as being only slightly in advance of the writings of Dr Colenso and the Bishop of London, and by no means unorthodox, in comparison with many works of the dignified clergy. The "Age of Reason," theologically, like the "Rights of Man," politically, was the first theological work published in the English language, which was adapted to the comprehension of the unlettered classes, as distinct from those who had enjoyed a liberal education. Paine's influence was immense. To-day it is a mere tradition, but it created in England that peculiar propaganda, uniting extreme political and theological opinions, which in their progress, in the great Social Agitations of this century, has done for us what the Encyclopædists did for France. Why those works of Thomas Paine created such a sensation it is difficult for us to ascertain. That they inaugurated a new political and

theological era is undoubted. True, in the terrible Napoleonic struggle in which Great Britain was soon after engaged, the heart of the nation was so patriotic that it could think of little else except its national existence; but as soon as peace was purchased by the victory of Waterloo, political and theological agitation recommenced. The Jacobins, as they were then called, reviving the traditions of the old Pretender, and confusing this title with the famed Parisian Revolutionary Club, made a point of studying the works of Thomas Paine, and his successor, the *soi-disant* Peter Porcupine—a politician who had many points in common with Mr Bradlaugh, and who was, like his successor, an admirable tactician, who turned his opinions into a bank of issue, which produced more capital than could be drawn from a Government appointment. Indeed there is a great resemblance between the living leader of the Democracy and the dead champion of the People's Rights in the time of the Regency. William Cobbett and Charles Bradlaugh had both been soldiers; they appealed to the prejudices of the same class; they had in common that painful egotism which affects self-educated men; and there is little to differentiate between the eleemosynary demands (for ostensibly public purposes), of William Cobbett and Charles Bradlaugh, with his appeals for payment of his debts, when he admits to have earned during many years an income exceeding one thousand pounds per annum, while he invests his surplus

capital in foreign securities, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter. Both these leaders acquired at an early age the power of effective oratory, in speaking to uneducated people, and there can be little surprise that, at the death of Thomas Paine, William Cobbett became his successor as the counsellor of the Democracy.

When Cobbett ran away to America for the purpose of avoiding a prosecution for libel and slander, he was anxious to propitiate his English admirers, and he adopted a novel way to illustrate his staunchness to his political creed. He, ghoul-like, exhumed the bones of Thomas Paine, and brought them from the United States as a peace-offering to the readers of the *Annual Register*, which he edited. To advertise and accentuate his opposition to the Government, he refused to pay the duty demanded by the Excise on the supposed skeleton of Thomas Paine. For years it lay in pawn at the Custom-House, till some of the admirers of the great Freethinker redeemed it, as a sacred relic. Like all relics, it was of doubtful authenticity. The American disciples of the author of the "Age of Reason" allege that the bones stolen from a nameless grave were those of a negro, and not those of the author of the "Rights of Man." Be this as it may, William Cobbett for many years led the political section of the Freethought party, until he was elected by the freemen of Oldham as their representative in Parliament. During the years of the

agitation for political reform in which William Cobbett figured as leader of the section identified with Peterloo, the other section of reformers were represented by Richard Carlile, whose *Lion and Republican* narrates the struggles which preceded the first Reform Bill. Richard Carlile spent about nine years in prison for publishing "blasphemous libels;" and ultimately his efforts resulted in giving us an unstamped press. Richard Carlile was not an orator; the oratorical part of his programme was taken up by the Rev. Robert Taylor, the author of the "Devil's Pulpit," whose orations against Christianity were extremely popular sixty years ago. He, like many of his predecessors, was at last sent to jail for blasphemy; and from the "blood of martyrs" a party was formed, which ended in infidel lectures being permanently organised in London.

The Socialist scheme of Robert Owen at length arose, and drew within its fold all the scattered leaders of Infidelity. For ten years Halls of Science were erected, and mainly used to support the propaganda of Owenism, until its first collapse, about 1838. When Fergus O'Connor became leader of the extreme Reform wing, the contradictions in the Gospels no longer formed the subject of Sunday lectures in the Halls of Science, which were then monopolised by the advocates of the "Six Points of the People's Charter." The Socialists at length broke up as a political party. When Lord Brougham introduced Robert Owen to the Queen's Drawing-Room, the

Bishop of Exeter denounced his conduct in the House of Lords, and brought before the Peers the alleged laxity of the marital connections of the Socialists. The friends of Robert Owen, in reply, alleged that the new "Marriage Law," which permitted nuptials to be contracted at the Registrar's office, was satisfactory to the Socialists; but even Lord Brougham never recovered his lost prestige for daring to speak in defence of the Socialists. It was considered an insult to the Queen to introduce Robert Owen to the Drawing-Room, although Queen Victoria owed it to the generosity of the Socialist Leader that she herself was born on English soil; moreover the debt incurred by her father, the Duke of Kent, for this purpose, was not repaid till twenty-five years afterwards. At this period there could be no real accusation of immorality against the Socialists.

In 1840, the Freethinking section of the Socialists again split into fragments under Charles Southwell, who had for a short period acted as a Socialist lecturer. During the Social Agitation, most of the advocates held advanced views on theological subjects, but their leader, Robert Owen, evaded discussions upon biblical questions. He adopted the policy which has since been effectually carried out by modern Scientists, that doctrinal Christianity was *une quantité négligeable*, which should, in all cases of controversy, be ignored. According to the Owenites, if the "New Moral World" did not require theological support, then Theology was an excrescence which could be dispensed with; and if it

clashed with it, so much the worse for Theology. Like all theorists, Robert Owen had elaborated his system to what he considered perfection, and in his scheme there was no room for dogma. The Clergy would not admit that any new method of society could be devised which would exclude the operation of Christianity as taught by the Churches, and the fighting force of the religious world was impacted against the benevolent plans of the great Welshman. At every Congress special instructions were given to the lecturers to deal with the Social aspect of Titherley and New Harmony, and to preserve the Movement from being decimated by theological bitterness. Robert Owen's cautions were premature by half a century. That which he was unable to do has since been accomplished by Huxley, Tyndall, and Darwin. The Clergy attacked Socialism as Atheistic in its practical working. In reply, Fred Hollick, Mackintosh, and Haslam entered the lists to prove their denunciations were true. Had the Socialistic lecturers of 1830 to 1840 kept silent on this subject, there would have been no hiatus in England between the Materialistic and Metaphysical Freethinkers who founded the London University—men who, like Brougham, Grote, and Lawrence, gave an impetus to Thought, but who were chilled into silence when they became compromised by controversial theologians, who have always been ready to stigmatise speculative opinions as being allied with social immorality.

Charles Southwell was by no means the ablest

debater or the most learned representative of the Atheistical section of the Freethought advocates. He was a Cockney Infidel, possessed of the usual qualities of the class from which he sprung. Readiness in debate, quickness in repartee, acrimony in personalities, form the basis of a popular representative of extreme opinions, whether the speaker trade in Politics or Religion. This leader, Southwell, had graduated in the School of London Out-door Speakers, whose eloquence was as voluble as that of an Irish patriot. In conjunction with a few kindred spirits he brought out a journal which he styled the *Oracle of Reason*, after the manner of Charles Blount, in 1690. It was the first work that introduced the Evolution theory to the People. The "Vestiges of Creation" had made a profound sensation amongst the learned and scientific, so Southwell took the opportunity of bringing such writings before the intellectual workmen who were connected with the Socialists. Had he confined his efforts to those abstract speculations, he would not have suffered imprisonment for blasphemy, nor would he have lived to be the founder of the Erotic School of Freethought, of which Mr Bradlaugh is now the leading orator. A few weeks after the *Oracle of Reason* was started, Charles Southwell was arrested for his ultra-Free-thought utterances. When he was imprisoned in Bristol jail, George Jacob Holyoake, then a young Socialist, flew to the editorial post of danger, where he remained till he was also prosecuted for alleged

blasphemy. Other men and women volunteered for the vacant post of martyr as fast as the prison doors closed on each successive editor. Dozens of newsvendors were convicted for selling the *Oracle of Reason*, and its pages were sullied by articles which could only be justified by the wrongs of those who were suffering for expressing their undoubted right of Free Thought and Free Speech. At last, after a stormy and a brave existence, this journal died, and, phoenix-like, revived in the *Movement*.

The Socialist organisation was fast breaking up. The wealth of Robert Owen was dissipated in an agitation which proved abortive, and which ended by giving us Reforms *in detail*, which the great Socialist wished to bestow upon us *en bloc*. At last the insane madness of theological bitterness exhausted itself, and for a time there were no more prosecutions for blasphemy. The peripatetic advocacy of Freethought was confined to three men, who, for several years, divided the controversial field among them. Charles Southwell still maintained his position of *doyen* in ecclesiastical attacks. He lectured out of doors, at Coffee House Discussion Halls, and wrote pamphlets which were destitute of that sparkling vivacity which kept an audience in a roar of laughter, while the lecturer kept poking fun at a reverend antagonist. Robert Cooper was an advocate as distinct in his mode of thought and expression from Charles Southwell as it was possible to be. Cooper was a Lancashire man, who had been

reared in Democracy at a time when to be a Democrat was to be proscribed by all who wore a cloth coat or a silk dress. As an elocutionist and a debater, he was incomparably the ablest man who ever stood upon a Freethought platform. Diametrically opposed in thought, in expression, and in character to the class of London Thinkers, he succeeded in convincing audiences where other advocates left but a fleeting impression. He fully carried out the view so often expressed, of the great superiority and better grit of men of the Northern counties than of those of the more polished South. It is said that the river Trent divides the race of Englishmen, and it is certainly a fact that, if an impression is to be made upon the mind of England, it must be done by men who inherit the thought, as well as the language, of the Northern Counties. When addressed by a London orator, the complaint of a working man is that "there are too many words, and too few facts." The inapplicability of this dictum to him may possibly account for the reason why Robert Cooper had so enormous an influence over the most intelligent amongst the working classes, from the time of the break-up of the Socialist organisation to the era of the Russian War.

During this period George Jacob Holyoake still carried on the *Reasoner*, which existed for many years as the organ of Freethought. Mr Holyoake was a brilliant rhetorician. He was an essayist rather than a controversial advocate. He had the merit of

being a gentleman, and he elevated his creed until it became no disgrace to be known as a Secularist—a term Mr Holyoake first applied to those speculative thinkers who were agreed in rejecting supernaturalism without labelling themselves Atheists. There was no union of sentiment in the tri-partition of the Free-thinking world. Charles Southwell scandalised his colleagues by his *liaisons*. Robert Cooper stigmatised George Jacob Holyoake as a “Trimmer.” This gentleman sought to make friends with a class of supporters who were ashamed of being connected with poor men. Southwell published the *Lancashire Beacon*—a paper which was the organ of his friends. At its demise Robert Cooper issued, during three years, the London *Investigator*. Upon Cooper’s retirement, it passed under the editorship of a young writer whose *nom de plume* was “Anthony Collins,” who after two years was in his turn succeeded by “Iconoclast,” under whose editorship it soon died. The *Investigator* is worthy of remembrance for two things, which have since widely influenced Freethought. It was in its pages that “Iconoclast” was first introduced to the Freethinkers of a class above those who met to discuss the authenticity of the Bible at a convenient back street, or in a crowd at a public park. His first articles in the *Investigator* were upon the patriarchs, and they did not disclose anything new in biblical criticism. The publisher of the *Investigator* was also publisher of a book, then preparing for the press, called “Natural, Sexual, and

Physical Religion," by a Student of Medicine. A portion of this book, consisting of the "Economic Criticism on the Law of Population," was forwarded in "proof sheets" to the editor, "Anthony Collins," for review. An article appeared in the *Investigator* which introduced the treatise of G. R. (Dr Drysdale) to the Free-thinkers of England. The rival journal, the *Reasoner*, refused to touch the unclean thing. The attention directed to the new gospel was unwise, but the editor was very young and very enthusiastic. Not having read the medical portion of the work, his judgment was hasty, and although the theory of Malthus might be correct in the abstract, the changes in the method of food-supply in the two generations which had passed since this economical school of the "Dismal Science" had been invented, rendered the deductions from its teachings open to considerable doubt. Immediately upon the appearance of this review, the editor of the *Investigator* received the grave remonstrance of Mr Robert Cooper, who had for so many years led the van of aggressive Freethought in England. Almost simultaneously the rival leader, Mr Holyoake, spoke, both publicly and privately, in the most earnest terms respecting the introduction of matters which were alleged to be false in doctrine, prurient in morals, and, even if proved of practical utility must, of necessity, cast a cloud over the fair fame of advanced Thinkers in England.

It had not been forgotten how Richard Carlile had tarnished the fame of speculative seekers after Truth,

who were associated with him, by his publication of a work entitled "Every Woman's Book." This production sought to teach wives how to avoid becoming mothers. The *Investigator* held on its course, and lost the support of those who had sacrificed money, labour, and reputation, in order to advance what they considered as Truth.

Before the book was published, means were taken to give it an extensive circulation. Every effort was made to cause its teachings to be advocated by the Secular party. Where the book was too expensive to be purchased, pamphlets, tracts, leaflets, and handbills were printed to create a publicity, which soon told on its circulation. Added to this, the leaders of the Infidel party who adopted its teachings were bribed by anonymous eleemosynary aid, with the intention of securing their support. This was soon apparent in the Party, especially so when "Iconoclast" succeeded "Anthony Collins" in the conduct of the *Investigator*, which, under his hands, collapsed. The respectable subscribers, who, when they had become emancipated from theological dogma, still kept up a religious life, felt disgusted at being held responsible for what they termed "the religion of the brothel," withdrew from association with persons whom they could no longer introduce into their family circle. The Secular party, which had hitherto consisted of Freethinkers of various shades of dissenters from biblical orthodoxy, now became divided into two distinct sections; those who

followed the historic continuance of Hobbes and Locke, who sought to establish a Church of Humanity free from Supernaturalism, but based upon that religious and moral instinct underlying every Creed which has sprung from Christianity or Buddhism, as it was of the different Faiths which existed before Christ, and have descended in diverse forms to every race in the world. In contradistinction to this School of Thought, the new Creed of a Sexual Utilitarianism, as represented by the Erotic School of Mr Bradlaugh has been formulated.

Having now brought this rapid sketch of the History of the Freethought party down to the time when "Iconoclast" commenced his labours, sufficient has been said as an introduction to the subject. The active career of Mr Bradlaugh will necessarily embrace a record of some of his contemporaries during the last quarter of a century, wherein Mr Bradlaugh has been the undoubted leader of the Erotic School of Freethought, and in which his organ, the *National Reformer*, has been the exponent of his views, and that of his disciples; while opposed to this division is the party led by a brilliant, scholarly, and poetic writer who, under the *nom de guerre* of "Saladin" has succeeded in lifting the cause of Freethought from the gutter, through the medium of his journal, the *Secular Review*. "Saladin" has collected around him as brilliant a band of writers as was engaged by D'Alembert and Condorcet when Dogma was first attacked in France by the Encyclopædists.

Now that I have arrived at the stage when "Icono-

clast" made his *début* as an Orator and Journalist, I shall confine myself to tracing in his biographical career the marvellous rapidity with which Mr Bradlaugh has risen in the estimation of English Politicians, and possibly my readers may be enabled to form an idea of what this political leader will accomplish when he achieves his ambition of obtaining the post of Prime Minister of England, or the first President of the British Republic.

CHAPTER I.

*Early Life—Education—Leaving Home—Residence with
the Curliles—Ingratitude.*

WHEN a self-made man reaches the altitude of a seat among the Commons of England, his biography is studied by those who are desirous of profiting from the example of a career which has been attained through rigid self-denial, even if impelled by more than an ordinary ambition. Every observer of so rare an instance as that of a man rising from the ordinary crowd, by sheer intellectual force, must derive some consolation from knowing that, in England, there is a royal path to fame which does not demand a golden fee for leave to travel on its route. Every town in the empire contains numerous records of men who have risen to eminence by trading speculations, or by trafficking in the labour of others. There are countless thousands more of this class than there are of men who, like Mr Bradlaugh, have slowly but steadily climbed into a high professional and responsible rank through the possession of marvellous idiosyncratic powers. Many and terrible are the drawbacks which retard the progress of the self-taught student. He is handicapped in the race of Life. He has to compete with those who are born

with "silver spoons in their mouths," furnished with the means to carry out a university curriculum of study at an age when such facilities can alone be of service. Mr Bradlaugh has, without doubt, shown that he is possessed of powers and energies which would have secured him a fortune in any occupation he might have selected. He has pitched upon a most difficult pursuit. To his credit be it said that he has succeeded where thousands who have essayed the same flight have ignominiously failed. Had he remained in the legal profession, and had his ambition directed him to the higher branch of it, he might, as an Advocate, have had signal success, and might have obtained a Judgeship when he felt weary of the excitement and worry of the Bar. His predilection, however, lay towards the Senate, and he sought its portals through the favour of the English Democracy. How he strove for his prize, and how he obtained that which in the prime of life he won—while others pass successively from the platform to the grave without achieving the blue ribband of Demos—will be narrated in these pages, upon authorities gleaned from sources which will be generally authenticated by Mr Bradlaugh's own words.

I do not appear as the apologist of Mr Bradlaugh. I represent neither his principles nor his party. Without effrontery on the one hand or obeisance on the other, I approach the subject on which I write with perfect candour, and while repudiating the extravagant language which is made use of by the disciples

of Mr Bradlaugh, when attacking theological antagonists, I claim that the tendency of all modern Thinkers is to allow to all those who investigate the mysteries of theology, the utmost latitude of thought, without the infliction of any moral or legal penalty. It may be justly maintained that the bulk of persons *who think at all* upon sacred subjects are perfectly indifferent as to what a man's opinions may be, provided such opinions are expressed in a manner that will not prove offensive to others. I mention this at the outset, in order to disarm my readers of the impression that I entertain any prejudices either for or against Mr Bradlaugh, or his party. I shall deal with the utterances of this gentleman as if he were a purely historical personage; and I shall dwell upon the principles advocated by his friends and supporters, as if I were describing a sect or a cult.

The materials for this work have been gleaned from multifarious sources. Where there has been any official utterance, I have adopted it as the basis of my remarks, although I may sometimes dissent *in toto* from its deductions.

A biography appeared in 1880, by a writer who apparently obtained his particulars from the lips of Mr Bradlaugh. This work by implication has been certified as accurate by the honourable gentleman, in his dual capacity as hero and publisher. It will, to a certain extent, afford material for quiet reflection, the more so as the book bears internal evidence of

having been taken down in shorthand and written out to order. Of Mr Bradlaugh's ancestry I shall say very little. That is a subject upon which his disciples may weave the usual genealogical heraldry of myth and tradition. Whether he is a pure descendant of Demos or whether there is to be found traces of family gentility in his blood—such as biographers love to invent—is alike unknown to and uncared for by those who write to gratify public inquiry. Dealing with a man who has sprung from the people, it is only fair that Mr Bradlaugh should be regarded as his own ancestor. What he did as a boy, what were his favourite tastes and follies, it is premature to inquire into in the life of our hero. When he is carried in state to a great London cemetery, followed by a quarter of a million of mourners to weep at his tomb, as they wept for his great prototype Danton, then will be the time to fabricate pious fables of how, while in his cradle, he swore *écraser l'infame*; and how, when he heard of Hannibal swearing (or making "affirmation") at the altar of his country to cherish undying hatred to Rome, he bettered the example by registering a solemn vow to extirpate the House of Brunswick from Great Britain; and how he devised its accomplishment by means of an Act of Parliament, which he mentally drafted while yet in his infancy. There are already sufficient legends floating about the Hall of Science to provide several volumes of "Ana" of Charles Bradlaugh, and place him on an equal eminence with men who have acquired an

historical niche in the memory of Englishmen. Suffice it, however, to say that Charles Bradlaugh's father was a lawyer's clerk, between whom and his son there does not appear to have been any sympathy. His father was poor, and his poverty stung his son into disrespect, if, indeed, it did not sow the seeds of ingratitude; for no record has appeared which leads us to infer that the future Tribune ever sought to solace his parents, or even to study their creature comforts. The love of angling is the only link which reveals the slightest trace of his sire. In the voluminous writings of Mr Bradlaugh there is not to be found any record of that reverence due to father, or to mother, or to wife, or to brother, or, indeed, to any human being except—himself. From his earliest days his thoughts seem to have been absorbed in his own advancement. Of late years his egotism has been painful to witness on the platform, and it is but thinly veiled at St Stephen's. This egotism is and has been the root of that impacting energy which has enabled him to climb half way to the zenith of his ambition, when he has contemptuously kicked away the ladder by which he has risen. He owed his parents some debt for the education he received, but he who searches the writings of Mr Bradlaugh for a recognition of such debt, will search in vain.

He was entered at the National School in Abbey Street, Bethnal Green, when he attained the age of seven years. He was under tuition till he was about twelve years old, when he was taken into the solicitor's

office where his father had been many years employed. Here he remained two years. It is only reasonable to suppose that during this period his father superintended his education. The duties of a solicitor's junior clerk would be principally to copy documents to be kept as drafts. It was here that the honourable member for Northampton acquired that engrossing caligraphy which he has never been able to throw off. 'At this age, under the supervision of a parent who was a solicitor's managing clerk, the two years' employment may be considered to have been of more advantage in acquiring the elements of a sounder education than if the time had been spent in an ordinary middle-class school. When he was fourteen years of age, he obtained a situation as a wharf clerk, at a coal staith in the City Road. His duties here would have been to loaf about a hut on the canal bank, enter the orders as they came in, and receive payment of accounts. From the nature of his occupation, he had some spare time, which was, for the most part, spent in listening to the out-door harangues which, from time immemorial, have amused the district in which he resided. There, poverty is perennial, and Socialism, in all its phases, is advocated now as it was thirty-five years ago, when, united with the remnants of the Chartist movement, it formed the rear-guard of political discontent in the East of London. Charles Bradlaugh, however, could have been only an occasional listener to those doctrines, for his father was a member of the Church of England, and he appears

to have been, with his family, a regular attendant at the parish church. The future Infidel leader claims to have distinguished himself as a Sunday-school teacher at fourteen years of age. Surely this proves that his parents had not neglected his education, but that, on the contrary, he was carefully instructed in his morals from his earliest years.

The period at length arrived which brought a change both in the family relations of this youth, and, at the same time, led to his lapse from Christianity. The Rev. J. G. Packer, the Incumbent of St Peter's, Hackney Road, was making preparations for the confirmation of the junior members of his flock; and it is said that he felt so proud of the tuition of Master Bradlaugh, that he resolved, on the occasion of the visit of the Bishop, to request his Lordship to catechise this neophyte upon the foundations of the Christian faith. This statement did not emanate from the clergyman. If Mr Bradlaugh had not given his personal assurance upon this proposed innovation, the public might have been led to doubt the fact of a Bishop taking upon himself such duties. It appears, however, that the reverend gentleman selected a number of youths from out his future proposed communicants, who formed the usual advanced class for preparation for the coming confirmation. Master Bradlaugh at once set himself to the study of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and as this was insufficient to satisfy his intellectual voracity, as a candidate for confirmation, he voluntarily entered into

an inquiry of the "harmony" of the Gospels. Other and more devout persons than Charles Bradlaugh have been unable to understand the Articles in the Prayer Book upon which the Church of England is by law established, and thousands of volumes have been written for the purpose of "harmonising" the Gospels, without success; so we must not be surprised if the promising pupil of Parson Packer found difficulties in his quest which he could not surmount. He applied to his pastor for an explanation of the Gospel discrepancies, but whether it was that this clergyman was unable to answer the inquiries, or that they were couched in language which was improper, the fact is apparent that Mr Packer forwarded a complaint to his parishioner (Mr Bradlaugh, senior) to the effect that his son had imbibed Atheistical ideas which might become contagious amongst the scholars who were in the Sunday-school class instructed by Charles. The parson suspended Master Bradlaugh from exercising his functions as a teacher for a term of three months. To say the least of it, this was an unwise policy on the part of Mr Packer. Had he been a little painstaking with his charge, and had he exercised some tact and diplomacy in directing a course of theological study, the church-going section of the community might have benefited by the teachings of the Very Rev. Boanerges Bradlaugh, D.D., while the Social and Atheistic world would lack the eloquence of the Cardinal Bishop of the Old Street "Hall of Science." This suspension furnished Master Bradlaugh

with sufficient spare time to permit of his attendance at the open-air meetings in Bonner's Fields, where he rambled through the groups of peripatetic orators who discoursed on the "Six Points of the People's Charter," on Teetotalism, and on every other *ism* that could attract a crowd.

The Infidel party was well represented in those controversies which took place in Bonner's Fields; and young Bradlaugh's ambition was so great that he was anxious to teach before he had learned his lesson. As a Christian, he took the Christian part; but he was not used to the style of argument which commands success with the out-door congregations who dabble in critical exegesis. So great was his temerity, that he was prepared to enter into a public discussion with an Infidel on the subject of the "Inspiration of the Bible" at the Warner Place Hall (?)—an imposing title. The "hall" would probably hold, at most, an audience of some forty persons, who, whilst listening to an argument, imbibed their liquor and smoked their tobacco. The so-called hall was simply a coffee-shop, kept by Mrs Carlile. In this discussion, the combatants were a Mr Savage and the suspended Sunday-school teacher. The dispute appears to have taken place in 1849, when the *coup de grâce* was administered by the Infidel, and the most illustrious convert of the age was won over to the ranks of Atheism. The curious may exhume a paragraph, in the "Reports of Lectures" in the *Reasoner* of that date, provided the local reporter forwarded a notice

—which was generally done by the orator in person, as in most Mutual Admiration Societies. It is said that Master Bradlaugh tried to soothe his pastor by taking the pledge—which (in 1849) was considered one of the visible signs of a person being dissatisfied with both Church and State. It is rather strange that it took a full generation of Total Abstiners to live down the prejudices of the Clergy, as in all the earlier Temperance Societies the most prominent reformers who advocated those views were invariably considered to be Infidels. Charles Bradlaugh fell under this suspicion, and the suspicion was all the more aggravated when he called upon the clergyman to refute the Rev. Robert Taylor's "Diegesis."

At this point, grave charges are alleged against Mr Packer, which, if true, prove that he was not fit to have entrusted to him the spiritual supervision of young men; and, if false, it reflects strongly on the character of the great Infidel debater. The fact—if fact it be—was disclosed to the world at a public discussion held in Sheffield in the year 1858, between the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., a polemic divine, who had then devoted several years in a "special mission to convert Infidels," and who, on this occasion, came into conflict with "Iconoclast." The tenacity of this clerical pugilist was such that, after a period which embraces a generation of platform warfare, Mr Bradlaugh describes the last debate with this divine as the "calamity of his life." In this encounter, taunts were levelled at the Infidel

champion because he appeared under the name of "Iconoclast." In his reply he said:—

"I conceal my name because I am fearful of my reputation. I will tell him why I conceal my name, and then, perhaps, he will not be quite so ready to talk about it. A boy of fourteen, a Sunday-school teacher, named Charles Bradlaugh, began to think, and was foolish enough to believe in the honesty of Christians as well as of inquirers, and in his own name he was foolish enough to speak and publish his thinkings. The Rev. John Graham Packer, of St Peter's, Hackney Road, caused me to be expelled, wantonly and cruelly, from my home, and left to fight life's battle with the world, in despite of the world."

If this statement were reliable, young Bradlaugh would have had just grounds of complaint against his pastor, as well as against his father. Doubtless, prejudice may have been so strong in the mind of the young convert as to inflict a permanent wrong on a clergyman who was evidently well disposed towards youthful members of his flock under his spiritual charge. The world will be very slow to give credit to the accusation brought against Mr Packer by Mr Bradlaugh: that on account of his inability to understand the Thirty-nine Articles, or to reconcile the "harmony" of the Gospels, his spiritual guide should seek an interview with his father, and that the two conspired together to threaten the youth that unless "he changed his opinions within three days" he would be turned out of his father's house, and, in addition to being rendered homeless, his ruin would be completed by his employers discharging him within the three days, the utmost limit

of time allowed him to recant his heresies. It is difficult to conceive such a foul conspiracy to have ever been entertained. A clergyman could not be ignorant of the fact that, however immature a lad's opinions on Scriptural exegesis might be, they were the result of some doubt, which could be dispelled only by superior knowledge and reasoning, and that it was his duty, as a clergyman, to reason with one whom he was preparing for confirmation, irrespective of the fact that proficiency in the studies referred to are never required previous to a youth's undergoing the rite of confirmation. If it be correct that Charles Bradlaugh was *only fourteen years of age*, and a Sunday-school teacher, his pupils could have been only of an infantile age; and it is extremely unlikely that any superior proficiency would have been required of him more than of other young teachers, whose doctrinal examination has at all times been limited to the Church Catechism.

It would have been a vile and dastardly act in a clergyman to have sought out the employer of this boy and to have extorted a pledge that he should be dismissed if he did not conform to the edicts of the pastor, who, evidently, was well disposed toward his family. It is but fair to give Mr Packer's version of this story, in his own words, which appeared in a letter, dated 19th April 1860, addressed to the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., and was published by him at that time. The letter also contains reference to events of a later period, which shall be dealt with in their proper sequence.

“ST PETER’S PARSONAGE, BETHNAL GREEN,
April 19th, 1860.

“DEAR SIR,—Bradlaugh was in our Sunday-school, and at the age of about nineteen, joined himself to a set of Infidels (the Carliles) who came into my district, and by so doing incensed his father to a great degree ; but whether he turned him out of his house I do not know, most certainly he did not do so at my instigation or suggestion. On the contrary, I endeavoured to reclaim the young man, and to pacify his father. As an instance of my efforts in the latter direction, I may mention the following circumstances :—

“The father returning home one evening, saw a board hanging at the Infidels’ door announcing some discussion by Bradlaugh, in which my name was mentioned not very respectfully,* which announcement so enraged the father that he took the board down and carried it home with him, the Infidels calling after him, and threatening him with a prosecution if he did not restore the placard immediately.

“When Mr Bradlaugh, senior, got home, and had had a little time for reflection, he sent for me and asked my advice, and I urged him, successfully, immediately to send the said placard.

“Bradlaugh, junior, in spite of his father’s remonstrances, and of my advice, continued to be linked in with the Infidels, and was said to be engaged to (Hypatia) the daughter of one of them, and at last got involved in some money transactions with them, in which they made a tool of him, and then left him to his fate, so that he enlisted as a common soldier, and went through great hardships in Ireland, and at length persuaded his then widowed mother to buy him off with money which she had saved, he giving a solemn promise that *he would never again speak on subjects of religion, but only that of Teetotalism.*

“How he kept this promise his recent proceedings testify. His mother has often complained to me, with tearful eyes, of his cruel neglect of her.

“The cause of his Infidelity, I have no hesitation in saying (indeed, I have said so to himself), *was his unbounded conceit of his own abilities*, especially his capability of fluent speaking.

“At the age of nineteen or twenty, he used to preach Infidel doctrines in Victoria Park. On one of these occasions he pretended

* This perhaps refers to a lecture announced in the *Reasoner* of November 17, 1850, on “Pope Pius, Pope Bunting, and Pope Packer.”

to prove that Church of England ministers taught their people to worship the material sun.

"Mr T. G. Williams, a dissenting minister in my district, passing by at the moment, and hearing what he was upon, suddenly turned round, and said, 'You foolish boy, don't think I am going to argue with you, for you are beneath my notice ; but you are telling a lie, and you know it.' And then, addressing a few words to the bystanders, at once caused them all to turn away in contempt from the young Infidel. The friends of Bradlaugh, junior, used to announce their subjects in this way :—'On Sunday evening next, Mr —— will deliver a sermon from the devil's pulpit, on such and such a subject.'

"I am happy to say they made no converts by their preaching in my district, excepting the said Bradlaugh, and perhaps one or two of his companions.

"They were, indeed, utterly blasphemous and atheistical, and were, therefore, too bad even for the irreligious portion of Bethnal Green people.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"J. G. PACKER, M.A.

"To the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A."

I leave my readers to draw their own conclusions from the initial fact recorded in the life of Mr Charles Bradlaugh on his divergence from home and Christianity. Unless imagination and prejudice united to warp the mind of "Iconoclast" to such an extent as to fix a stigma upon a clergyman who expelled him from the Church, and against his father, who drove him out into the world for a mere intellectual escapade of doubt, we must believe that a foul and brutal wrong was committed against this young and helpless lad. If, on the contrary, a slander has been uttered against his father as well as his pastor, and reiterated during a lifetime to point a barb against the Church of England, and to exalt himself at the expense of his father's memory, a heavy charge rests upon the reputation of Mr Charles

Bradlaugh. It is but common charity to suppose that, at an age when precocious boys take to reading "penny dreadfuls," investing their spare savings in pistols and dark lanterns, it is possible that the current epidemic of youthful adventure might have attacked this young Sunday-school teacher in another mode, and that the Infidel eruption broke out after listening to some wild oratory on Hackney Downs, which was retailed to his companions. Under such circumstances, the reverend gentleman would naturally feel it his duty to isolate the theological patient, so as to prevent the spread of biblical doubts amongst boys who were preparing for confirmation. Perhaps the honourable member for Northampton, now that he is approaching the zenith of his ambition, will yet do justice to a father whom he has foully slandered by accusations which are libellous to our common humanity.

While on this subject, I am compelled to notice a confusion of dates—which has never been accounted for—as to the age of Charles Bradlaugh at the time of this hypothetic banishment from home. In the Sheffield discussion, Mr Bradlaugh states that he was fourteen years of age when this event occurred; while in the authorised biography printed and published by his own firm (apparently as an inspired record of his life), it is stated that he was barely seventeen years old when "he found himself alone in the streets of London, with no money and hardly any clothes." It is certainly important to reconcile this contradiction. It would be

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interesting to know his exact age when the alleged expulsion from home took place. At fourteen a lad could not be expected to provide for himself. At seventeen the difficulties, though severe, would be less. He appears to have made the acquaintance of Mr B. B. Jones, who, hearing of his homeless condition, gave him the promise of shelter for a week, till he could devise some means by which the youth could earn a livelihood. Bradlaugh decided this point by undertaking to canvass the neighbourhood for orders for coal, upon which orders he might obtain a commission. This was work requiring much patience, as when the orders were obtained he had to persuade the customer to pay on delivery—a method which is not even yet universal in Bethnal Green. He had some cards printed with his name and *address* as “Charles Bradlaugh, Coal Merchant,” one of which, after dark, he placed under his father’s door. His behaviour, and the “after-dark” card freak, are hardly consistent with his statement that it was a source of anxiety with him “lest his parents should institute any pursuit.” His legal knowledge and experience must have made him aware that the age of seventeen his father had no power of compelling him to reside under the paternal roof, except with his own free-will and consent. It is absurd to suppose that a father, having expelled his son, would afterwards institute any pursuit to bring him back.

Mr Bradlaugh’s career as a coal merchant collapsed at an early date. He is said to have sold “several tons

of coal per week " to a baker's wife, who required that quantity for baking purposes. This sale produced a commission of ten shillings per week. Upon one occasion, as the story goes, the lady stated that she had heard that her coal merchant was not orthodox, and on that account she feared the bread would smell of brimstone, if she continued to fire it with coals purchased from an Infidel coal merchant! She refused to continue her custom, which probably led to the short duration of the coal agency.

The energy of Mr Bradlaugh was, and is, unquestionable, and I have no wish to underrate his distinguished talents. He at once turned to another occupation. He had made friends with many Freethinkers, who had every wish to lend him a helping-hand in time of need. One of them was a Mr Barnes, of Goswell Road—a manufacturer of buckskin braces. Mr Barnes employed Mr Bradlaugh to act as his traveller, on commission, taking care to give him a breakfast before he started, and a dinner when he returned, irrespective of the fact that he found no customers. At this stage he had a good friend in the widow of Richard Carlile, who, with her son, Julian, and her two daughters, Hypatia and Theophila, resided at the Warner Place Temperance Hall, Hackney, where he had the debate with Mr Savage. This lady gave him a home when he left his father's house, and from her connection with a section of the Freethought party, she was able to be of material assistance to him, notwithstanding that she was in very

straitened circumstances. Mrs Carlile was only the *de facto* widow of Richard Carlile, and in the life of this publicist, written by Mr G. J. Holyoake, the author has some difficulty in veiling the relationship with a euphemism which would allow of its introduction to conventional readers—a method which has since been followed by a precedent created by the biographer of “George Eliot.” Possibly it was in this school that Mr Bradlaugh first learned the doctrines of Neo-Malthusianism. Richard Carlile was a consistent Freethinker, of the Erotic School, inasmuch as his opinions were so *free* as to be bound by no bond of decency, during the whole of his life. Still, without a single exception, he was the most useful man who ever stood in the deadly breach ready to defy an *ex-officio* Information for Political or Seditious Libel. To his efforts—purchased by nine years of imprisonment—we owe to-day in some measure the freedom of the British Press. It is customary to pass his name by as if he were a mere Demagogue, who loved to be in perpetual conflict with the law officers of the Crown. But his defiant antagonism was effective in obtaining the freedom of the Press. He lived in a state of constant conflict with the Society for the Suppression of Vice, which sought to suppress all publications which did not come up to their standard of orthodoxy. He died poor, and left his family to the protection of a few Freethinkers, who had stood by him in his struggles with the Crown lawyers. When the doctrine of Malthus

was believed to be the foundation stone of modern political economy, and all the leading Economists dreaded the increase of population, he issued his "Every Woman's Book," which was denounced by Moralists with the same fervour as is the "Elements of Social Science," recommended by Mr Bradlaugh, in the present day. Whether it was through the influence of "Isis" (the *de facto* Mrs Carlile) that those views were implanted in the mind of Charles Bradlaugh, or whether he was the exponent of ideas he had gathered by mixing with the Socialists, I know not. The fact, however, remains that it was at that time the future Infidel leader obtained his first success as a coffee-house debater.

At this stage of his life our hero seems to have been attracted to the family of Mrs Carlile by the "tender passion." In one of his public statements he describes Hypatia Carlile as "the first girl I ever loved." Perhaps this was the attraction that "drove him from his father's house" (?) The passion does not appear to have been reciprocated by the young lady, for she was not enamoured of her *gauche* suitor, who, at that period, was awkward in his manner, and destitute of any personal graces to have rendered him acceptable to a young lady. He used to figure in the nightly debates which took place in obscure coffee-houses prior to the rise of "Clubs." In every district the unattached Democracy, the Secularist, the Deist, the Atheist, and the representative of every political, religious, and social craze, flocked of an evening to the London "Coffee-house," where a dis-

putant could air his theory at the trifling expense of ordering a villainous concoction which, by a liberal stretch of imagination, was called coffee. At eight o'clock the "chairman" would read over the subject of the night's debate, and introduce the "opener," who duly made his speech. After the "opener's speech," anyone in the audience who caught the chairman's eye could join in the debate. A fresh subject was fixed for each night; but, regardless of the title, the "speech" was substantially the same. Each orator repeated his stereotyped ideas. The only benefit derived from attending those discussions was the fluency acquired by young speakers. It was in this school that Charles Bradlaugh made his early reputation.

It was then a period of considerable political excitement. The *fiasco* at Kennington Common, on the 10th April 1848, had discredited Fergus O'Connor and the Moral Force Chartists who wouldn't fight, because the same policy had previously ruined Daniel O'Connell and Smith O'Brien in Ireland. The year of reaction (1849) had driven Kossuth into exile, and some thousands of Polish and Hungarian fugitives had sought the shelter of England. They were hospitably received by the English nation, and Bradlaugh took a great interest in their welfare. His intimacy with the Carlile family brought him into connection with the Holyoakes, who introduced him, as a promising youth, to the "John Street Institution,"—a place which Thomas Cooper has made classical by his historical and biographical orations. It was in this hall that Ernest Jones, in the full flush

of his genius, sought to gather together the remnants of the London Radicals. Association with men of this class aroused a feeling of ambition in young Bradlaugh to acquire knowledge which would elevate him in the social scale. He commenced to study French and other languages, in which he was assisted by a gentleman who visited the Carliles, out of respect to Richard Carlile, whose friend he had been when living, and who interested himself in teaching his children to read and speak French. Bradlaugh was permitted to join in the exercises, as well as to share at Mrs Carlile's humble table. Although Mr Bradlaugh acknowledges he was in love with Hypatia, the passion was neither deep nor lasting. After his marriage, he honoured this lady by giving one of his daughters her name. While leading this life in the Carlile family, he appears to have felt that he was encroaching on their narrow means; and having fallen into some trifling difficulties, which compelled him to borrow about £4, 15s., he determined to seek his fortune in the army. He could not complain of his Freethinking friends at this crisis; for, despite their poverty, they commenced to raise a subscription to extricate him from his embarrassments. The authorised biographer of Mr Bradlaugh alleges that this fact coming to his knowledge, his pride was aroused, "and this, far from pleasing, profoundly humiliated him. It made him realise more forcibly his own poverty; and then the matter was complicated with the bitterness of owing money he could not pay."

It is said that his affections not being returned by

Hypatia, formed one of the reasons why he left the Carlile family. This may be so, but it looks very strange that his future remembrance of the "first girl I ever loved" should be forgotten simultaneously with the memory of his parents. I do not read that he was jilted; probably he was—ignored.

Before proceeding further with the life of Mr Bradlaugh, after he left the shelter of Mrs Carlile's home, I will briefly refer to the Carlile family, even at the risk of anticipating events, as I shall not have further cause to mention this family; and it may serve to enable us to form an opinion of Mr Bradlaugh's feelings with reference to those friends who have on so many occasions rendered him assistance.

From the time when Charles Bradlaugh first left the home of Mrs Carlile and her daughters (17th December 1850), without bidding them farewell, or informing "the first girl I ever loved" where he was going, or how he intended to live, there does not appear to be any evidence of his having communicated with them for nearly eighteen years. It might have been mere forgetfulness, but it is not a pleasant feature in this gentleman's career, that those who were nearest and dearest to him are allowed to pass from his mind into oblivion, to be recalled only when they again bestow upon him monetary benefits. In his writings, neither father, nor mother, nor wife, nor dearest friends are mentioned with that feeling of reverence which a man should have for the memory of those who have

helped to place him in a better position. Mrs Carlile and her daughters deserved *some* recognition. Those who search the columns of the *National Reformer* for such recognition will, unfortunately, search in vain.

When Mrs Carlile died, the humble friends of her husband, who had raised money to erect a monument to his memory, wisely thought that this fund would be better employed in sending the family to the United States, where friends would welcome them. The amount, contributed in small sums, was only £20. At this time Mr Bradlaugh was in the army, and was earning money, in addition to his pay. *His* name does not appear in the list of subscribers, nor was he among those who wrote letters of sympathy. The first notice of even the existence of "Isis'" daughters—save the declaration that Hypatia was "the first girl I ever loved"—is to be found in "Rough Notes" of *National Reformer*, July 19, 1868:—"We see that among the subscriptions announced by the *Chicago Liberal* for the *National Reformer* Defence Fund is one from Hypatia and Theophila, daughters of Richard Carlile. It was with these two sisters and their mother that, twenty years ago, we found kind words and shelter when, scarce fifteen, we left home and family to enlist in the Freethought ranks. It is more than *eighteen years* since we last *heard* from them." In another place he says (*N. R.* of Aug. 31st, 1873, p. 131):—"After leaving home I was chiefly sheltered by Mrs Sharples Carlile, with whose children, Hypatia, Theophila, and Julian, I shared such comforts as

were at her disposal." It was two years after he had left this "shelter" that Mrs Carlile died. Sixteen years after her death, the silent reproach of a subscription in favour of a cause for which their father had fought (a threatened Press Prosecution) was the occasion of Charles Bradlaugh's mentioning "the first girl I ever loved,"—an utterance which had been so theatrically pronounced by him on the platform. Six years afterwards, Mr Bradlaugh is at Chicago, giving an oration in the city where those two sisters are living. He does not write to say he will visit them, and renew the acquaintance of past years. He does not appear to have recognised their existence. He left it to those ladies to accost him at the door of the lecture-room. The following is Mr Bradlaugh's description of the interview:—

"On arriving at the lecture hall, I was stopped at the foot of the stairs by a face which I hardly recognised. It was one I had not seen for a quarter of a century. 'Don't you know me, Mr Bradlaugh?' was the greeting. My memory went back to the days when food was short, and when I shared the scanty meal with the questioner, her mother, and her sister, in Warner Place; but twenty-five years had sufficiently blotted the memory, and blurred the page, to confuse me in the recognition. Half hesitatingly I said, 'I am not quite sure; I think it is Hypatia.' I was wrong, however, it was her sister Theophila; and thus, after so long a time, I was again brought face to face with the daughter of one to whom the English Freethought party, in a great measure, owe the free press and free platform which we use to-day. I only stayed in Chicago that night; and even the interview on that short stay was painful to one, for I could not help wondering whether, thirty years after my death, my own daughters might be in a strange land, so entirely overlooked as are the daughters of Richard Carlile, the bravest of those rough pioneers who have led the war against the law-protected Church."*

* *National Reformer*, January 25, 1874.

There are but few men who have achieved eminence in life who would not have taken some pains to express gratitude for such services as were rendered by these poor women to Mr Bradlaugh. Even had he forgotten his benefactresses until then—a period of eighteen years—and had he possessed a soul at all susceptible of generous impressions, he would have placed these ladies at the seat of honour at that meeting, which he had come to address; and he would have paid a tribute of praise to the memory of their dead mother, who, in remembrance of the proscribed opinions of her husband, had sheltered a youth because he was professedly following in her husband's footsteps. He was silent. Reference to the heretic, Richard Carlile, might have interfered with the influx of American dollars; and on that lecturing tour Mr Bradlaugh discreetly kept his Freethought in the background.

Such was the episode of the early life of Mr Charles Bradlaugh with the Carlile family. There are but few of my readers who will think that the kindness bestowed by this poor woman upon a friendless lad has yet been sufficiently acknowledged. She took him, a fugitive from his parents, into her house; she gave him a shelter; she divided her children's food with him, and yet he allows a quarter of a century to elapse without showing any desire to mourn the mother's fate, or to inquire after the daughters' welfare; and then the survivor has to seek him at a public hall, in a distant country, to claim his recognition.

CHAPTER II.

Joins the Army—Military Stock Exchange—Oratory at Sea—Boxing Match—Lectures in Dublin—Evidence of Brother—Bought Off.

WHEN Charles Bradlaugh failed at selling buckskin braces, and was unfortunate in love, he determined to achieve success in another line open to all young men free from physical infirmity. His biographer says that "he quietly went out, leaving his good friends without any farewell scene, not knowing what to do, but firmly resolved to put an end to a crisis which had already been prolonged beyond endurance." It is said that he strolled to the recruiting rendezvous of the British army at Charing Cross, where he saw a flaming poster stating that a few smart young men were wanted for the East India Company's Service, who, on being approved of by the medical officer, would be entitled to a bounty of £6, 10s. The *douceur*, he concluded, would be sufficient to discharge his liabilities of £4, 15s., and enable him to start on a new career. Sergeant Kite was at once interviewed. He described the special advantages exclusively possessed by his corps, and explained how every private who had any education would, in a very short time, leap into a good billet, preparatory to his receiving a commission from "John Company;" adding that, if

his behaviour was good, he would rapidly become a colonel, unless he was drafted into the Covenanted Service, where he was sure to be appointed a Resident at the court of an Indian Prince. The sergeant, however, was a member of a Recruiting Exchange, where the commodity of recruits was dealt in like stocks and shares elsewhere. When there happened to be a "bull and bear" transaction, and Sergeant Kite could not meet his liabilities on settling day, he would "borrow a man" from Sergeant Hawk, to enable him to complete his engagements. It happened that, when Charles Bradlaugh took the shilling which made him a soldier, Sergeant Kite recollected that he had "borrowed a man" from Sergeant Hawk. As a scrupulous member of the Recruiting Exchange, he wished to pay his debts without the annoyance of being "posted" a defaulter. Without informing his victim, he squared his account with Sergeant Hawk, and Charles Bradlaugh found that he was enlisted for the British Service, instead of being enrolled in the East India Company's army. The entire legal instincts of Bradlaugh rose against this little transaction. True to his polemic bias, he threatened the unfortunate sergeant with all the pains and penalties of the law, and with him all and sundry who were parties to the transaction. When taken before the doctor for examination, he laid the case before him in so clear a manner as to satisfy him that there was a probability of an *exposé* which might,

very probably, injure more officials than Sergeants Kite and Hawk. The doctor asked him to look out of the window, where he would see a number of representatives of the army strutting about, and told him to pick out the regiment he preferred, according as he liked the uniform of the men. He selected the 7th Dragoon Guards, and the difficulty was ended by his being sworn in as a member of this gallant regiment. Soon after he had joined the "awkward squad," he was drafted off with a number of recruits who sailed for Ireland. Mr Bradlaugh did not appreciate his fellow recruits. He was the only man amongst the number who wore broadcloth and a silk hat. This was an offence to his comrades, who considered that as soon as a man became a soldier, it was his duty to sell his clothes, and spend the money derived from the sale in liquor and tobacco, to be consumed amongst the "squad," as a sign of comradeship.

His kit was soon burst open by his comrades, who evinced great astonishment when it was discovered that he was possessed only of a vocabulary and a Greek lexicon. They used the two books for kicking purposes in a football match. Mr Bradlaugh was not physically, even if metaphorically, a fighting man, otherwise he would not have permitted his comrades to make free with his literary treasures. He recovered with difficulty, and in a mutilated condition, his Greek lexicon, which he now preserves as an historical and classical relic. To add to other calamities, he was sea-sick on the short passage

to Dublin. A storm followed, and the ship was in danger. The captain found it necessary to shift the cargo, in order to ballast the vessel in a more secure manner. He promised to the recruits a reward of £5 for their services in performing this labour. The storm exhausted itself in the Irish Channel. When the safety of the ship was assured, the captain discovered that he had been recklessly generous in his offer to the recruits. To avoid payment, and yet pretend to keep his word, he selected four of the leading men, who, apparently, might be troublesome, to whom he gave five shillings each, in the expectation that the rest of the "gang" would quarrel with their comrades for a share of the twenty shillings rather than trouble him for the £4 unpaid. Mr Bradlaugh was indignant at this breach of faith. He astonished the captain by delivering a fierce invective against the outrageous immorality displayed in trying to evade his bargain. His biographical amanuensis says: "To the unutterable surprise of everyone, he delivered a fierce, menacing harangue, upbraiding the captain in no measured terms, exposing in lucid language the meanness of his action, and concluding with the appalling threat of a letter to the *Times*. To this day Bradlaugh remembers, with a small sense of self-satisfaction, the utter and speechless amazement of the captain at the sight of a person so miserable in appearance suddenly becoming so formidable in speech and menace."

Captains have a traditional horror of sea-lawyers. This captain capitulated. The mutiny was quelled by

payment of the amount promised, and the recruits not only helped to save their own lives but received their full share in the £5, as the price of the salvage. Mr Bradlaugh's comrades, not having had the advantage of an oratorical education on Hackney Fields, were gratified at the success of their champion, and his biographer tells us that, "During the removal of the cargo, the soldiers had not failed to steal a few trifles that fell out of the bags and cases, and they were consequently able to ply Bradlaugh with a plentiful supply of herrings and biscuits during the rest of the journey," which appeared to have occupied three days, from the time of leaving London till landing in Dublin. He was conveyed to the Newbridge Barracks, Kildare, and was duly paraded before Lieutenant-Colonel Ainslie, who, having surveyed him from head to foot, seemed astonished at his rickety appearance, and asked him what the devil he thought he was fit for. He was then six feet high, but according to his own account, which coincided with that of all who knew him at that age, he was ill-shaped, awkward in his movements, and he bore traces of being a lad who had suddenly shot up, and had overgrown his strength. He appears to have been popular in his troop; and, in fact, Mr Bradlaugh always could make himself agreeable to both male and female, whether young or old. At the time he joined the army, and for years afterwards, he was an ardent teetotaler. He delighted to preach on the merits of total abstinence. His first sermon, as a

soldier, was delivered while standing on a ladder, when he was engaged in whitewashing the quarter-master's room. He was still in his shabby black clothes, which bore painful evidence of having been made for him when he was some two or three inches less in stature. The quarter-master's daughter, observing his pale face, his apparent illness, and the evident signs of former respectability in his thread-bare clothes, which were now bespotted with whitewash, concluded that he was ill, and fetched him a glass of wine. The young lady could not ascend to the ceiling, near which the recruit was balancing himself on a ladder, with a pail of whitewash which he was using. On being offered the wine, he refused it in his elevated position. It would have been undignified to come down. With his customary eloquence, he descanted loudly, and at considerable length, on the sin of drinking intoxicating liquors, and he eulogised a few of the virtues of temperance.

At last he had seriously to commence his drill, and he very early discovered the fact that soldiering was not to his taste. He did not like the British army discipline, which, however monotonous it may be, has the effect of turning out the best cavalry troops in Europe. He had hitherto been accustomed to debate with everyone who challenged his opinions, but he now found that the word *discussion* was not recognised in the riding-master's vocabulary. It was difficult for him to make his Rosinante to keep step, to mark time, and for himself to judge distance. He was too awkward to fence

creditably, and the troop-horses had such a contempt for his horsemanship that they took a delight in "buck-jumping." Whenever he mounted one particular charger, it performed certain gyrations, which, as it took the fancy to be vicious or playful, invariably dropped its rider either over its head or over its tail. This afforded fine sport for the troopers, who made as merry with Recruit Bradlaugh as "Iconoclast" has since done with the blunders of a helpless town missionary whom he may have met in debate. Unable to master the steed, he concluded his next best feat was to accomplish a victory over the best boxer amongst the jeerers who laughed derisively at the contest between the horse and the recruit. Whether Charles Bradlaugh had had any experience in the pugilistic ring is a fact unrecorded in the annals of Secularism; but it is undoubtedly on record that he took the usual steps to challenge his antagonists to a fight, without having any particular anticipation of victory. He felt that if he were destitute of science, he had plenty of staying power, and that if he were even clumsy, fortune might favour him sufficiently to allow him to give his antagonist a powerful, swinging blow, which might act as a *coup de grace*. The fight took place. Bradlaugh got terribly mauled, but at last found his opportunity of administering a powerful stroke, which was registered as a "knock-down." Both combatants had more than enough of each other. They were frightfully battered. Bradlaugh was on the point of yielding, thinking he had done sufficient to establish his reputa-

tion for courage, when, to his great surprise, his opponent withdrew from the struggle, and acknowledged that he was beaten.

On his way to Dublin, Mr Bradlaugh had, in the estimation of his fellow recruits, obtained the laurel of "orator," and he had now added to his accomplishments the fame of being a pugilist of no common order. The troopers, finding that he was better educated than most of them, cleaned his accoutrements and groomed his horse, in the expectation that he would write their letters, and explain, where necessary, points of law. Either from the habit of reading, or the consumption of tea, he acquired the nickname of "Leaves." He was, without doubt, popular in the barracks. One of the customs of soldiers, when leaving a town where they have been located, is to collect wood from any place where they can find it, on the day previous to their departure, because on that day no wood is served from the stores. It appears that Bradlaugh had not been acquainted with this custom, for he returned to his quarters without any material for fuel. With that daring for which he was renowned, he crossed over to the quarters of the 17th Lancers in quest of faggots. After considerable search, he saw nothing save a dog-kennel, with a ferocious-looking inmate. The dog-kennel appeared to Mr Bradlaugh to be composed of good material for fuel. Without the least trace of fear, he walked up to Cerberus, unfastened his collar and chain, and lifting the kennel on his shoulders, bore it in triumph to

his post, as a contribution to the stock of firewood. The audacity of the act was rewarded by the good faith of the 17th Lancers, who would not inform on the perpetrator of such a heroic deed.

The 7th Dragoon Guards were removed to Dublin. Bradlaugh had now more scope for the exhibition of his public spirit. He assisted the Temperance party by addressing meetings. By this method he got introduced to circles which were not open to many private soldiers. He was sometimes refused permission to attend these Temperance Meetings. When this was the case, he surreptitiously left the barracks, by descending from a window by the aid of ropes, and sometimes of blankets and sheets tied together and held fast by his comrades while he was alighting. In this way Mr Bradlaugh kept his lecturing engagements. There must have been a good deal of freedom and laxity in the regiment, or such facilities would not have been given as would enable "Leaves" to mix with the civilian population of Dublin. He was invited to take his seat between an eminent Roman Catholic priest and a Mr Haughton, who was one of the earliest Temperance Reformers in Ireland. A young soldier in red uniform, and a Roman Catholic priest in black, declaiming against the drink traffic, and anathematising public-house keepers, doubtlessly formed a considerable source of attraction to the working classes.

On Sundays the regiment was sent to Rathmine's Church. On a particular Sunday, a clergyman preached

a sermon there which he asserted to be "too learned" for the soldiers' understanding. This announcement affronted the military part of the congregation, and "Leaves" was accordingly deputed to answer the discourse, and expose what the clergyman was pleased to label "too learned." The following Sunday the soldiers were in rapt attention when the parson rose to comment upon the letter he had received from "Leaves," but no sooner had he commenced, than the troopers simultaneously dropped their swords on the floor, which was an effectual way of silencing a controversy. Once more Bradlaugh was in luck, for an inquiry, which was instituted for the purpose of investigating the proceedings at church, was suddenly dropped while in embryo, otherwise "Leaves" might have had an opportunity of airing his eloquence before a court-martial. He now became orderly-room clerk, and was in consequence released from sentry work and drill. Major Bentick was kindly disposed towards him, and as Bradlaugh relieved him from the work of making-up the regimental accounts, he received many and kindly services from the father of the present Duke of Portland. Besides lecturing on teetotalism, he took an interest in local matters. There was a road between the barracks and Inniscarra which was stopped up by the proprietors of a powder manufactory. Trooper Bradlaugh investigated the legal merits of the controversy, and concluded, as a result of his investigation, that the landowners had "no case." At the head of the vil-

lagers, and assisted by some of his comrades, he addressed a meeting denouncing the conduct of the "land-grabber." The speech concluded, he marched, followed by the crowd of villagers and soldiers, to the obnoxious gate, pulled it up and wrote on the relic, "Pulled up by Charles Bradlaugh, C. 52., VII. D.G. (7th Dragoon Guards)." The landowners, naturally concluding that Trooper Bradlaugh was simply the nominee of the military authorities, no action for trespass was instituted against him. He derived both profit and glory from this mock-heroic act. He was paid in kind by the farmers, and in reputation by his comrades.

Soldiering did not agree with Mr Bradlaugh. He found none of the officers who followed the example of the captain of the troop of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who, when he enlisted as a dragoon, amused himself with writing Greek hexameters over his charger's stall. In this case sympathy was elicited, which ended in the poet's release. Since then, educated men have, presumably, become so common, that they no longer attract special attention, and are no more the recipients of extra favours. Nobody of importance took any interest in Charles Bradlaugh, whose great desire was to appear once more amongst the Hackney Radicals—a pleasure more congenial to him than grooming his horse, or even making out regimental accounts. History is silent as to the relations he kept with his parents, who, by the testimony of his brother, and his father's life-long employers, were everything parents should be, and it is a

cruel slander on their memories either to revile them, or to damn them with faint praise. If Charles Bradlaugh had been a dutiful son, he would not have left his home, and insulted his father by his conduct, while he professed to be afraid of being compelled to return home by his father's recourse to law. This is irreconcilable with the story detailed by his biographical amanuensis. The father died while the son was in the army. It is no more than an act of justice to the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, senior, to transcribe what his younger son, William Robert Bradlaugh, has written about him, when describing his own feelings at the period of his conversion:—

“In an instant I was all attention, and I found he was preaching on the very point which had so perplexed the conversion of the soul. As, in graphic language, he pictured scene after scene in his own life; so, in like manner, the whole of my past life, with all its follies and bitterness, flitted vividly before me, as in panoramic view.

“The scene of distress occasioned in the family through my brother's leaving home, was the first presented. This was followed by my father's death-bed. Though nearly three-and-twenty years had passed away, that death-bed scene, with all its surroundings, came fresh to my recollection. So faithfully did memory depict the scene, that the interval, instead of being many years, appeared to be but of days. I could see my dear mother leading me by my young hand to the bedside, that I might receive a dying father's blessing. Tears were streaming down that mother's cheek, but those tears were not the tears of maddening despair, nor was the weeping that of those who sorrow, ‘having no hope, and without God in the world,’ but they were the tears of the believer, out of which beamed rays of hope. My father's thin hands were clasped together, and the pale lips moved in prayer. The end had now come; for, winging its flight heavenward, the

spirit of my father quitted its tenement of clay, to be for ever with Jesus. Thus passed away one of the kindest, noblest, and best men that ever lived, fully persuaded and trusting in the truth of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which had been his guide through life, and effectual solace in the hour and darkness of death."

In an autobiography written in 1874, Mr Bradlaugh says:—"While I was in the regiment my father died, and, in the summer of 1853, an aunt's death left me a small sum, out of which I purchased my discharge and returned to England, to aid in the maintenance of my mother and family." By these words the world is induced to believe that his desire to leave the army was caused by his anxiety to support his mother in her widowhood. As far as the numerical strength of his family was concerned, it consisted only of two persons—his mother and his brother. As a nomination had been obtained for his brother in the British Orphan Asylum, where he was educated, his mother was the only member of his family who might have had a claim upon his labour. By the evidence of his brother, Charles Bradlaugh's statements are entirely contradicted. It is on record that his mother supplied the money to buy him off. This appears from the following words of Mr W. R. Bradlaugh:—

"As in many books and pamphlets containing a record of my brother's life, the statement has appeared to the effect that, in consequence of the death of an aunt, who left him a legacy, he secured his discharge from the army, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that there is no foundation for such a statement, as my mother, and no one else, purchased my brother's discharge from

the 7th Dragoon Guards on the eve of the commencement of the Crimean war. This explanation is necessary, inasmuch as Secularists are constantly questioning the truth of my affirmation in this particular, and my dear mother being dead, cannot be appealed to."

It is perfectly true that Bradlaugh manifested great anxiety to abandon the scarlet uniform of the Dragoon Guards. There was a cause for this haste in the premonitory symptoms of a great war, in which we were likely to be engaged with Russia. Throughout the year 1853 there were ominous signs of hostilities in the disputes as to the possession of the "Holy Places." The Aberdeen Government was temporising with a great difficulty. Behind the now extinct party of "Peelites," and the supporters of Richard Cobden, was the rising tide of English opinion, which saw in Lord Palmerston the only War Minister who could command public confidence. The empire instinctively turned its thoughts to the strengthening of the Army, in preparation for foreign service. It was at this epoch that Trooper Bradlaugh displayed such intense eagerness to retire from the Army. The death of his father formed a reasonable pretext, of which full advantage was taken. The testimony of Mr Packer, and that of his own brother, is conclusive that he persuaded his mother to "buy him off." Until the contrary is proved, by the distinct affirmation of the honourable gentleman, this account must be taken, by all reasonable persons, as the true statement. His great desire was to become a civilian, before the outbreak of

war might require his services in the Crimea. This explains the giving of the solemn pledge to his mother, that if she would find the money for the purpose of purchasing his discharge, "he would never again speak on subjects of Religion, but only on that of Teetotalism." The world knows how his pledge was kept. The money for his discharge was lodged at Cox & Co.'s, Army Agents, in October 1853, a few months before the Russian War broke out, but during the actual preparations for the commencement of hostilities. It is but fair to presume that it was money bequeathed to his mother, whose maternal instincts were successfully invoked by her son, who was anxious to escape from the Army, before his regiment was ordered abroad for active service. There is an amount of disingenuousness about this transaction which demands further explanation from the honourable member for Northampton. In his journal (March 29th, 1855) there is an intimation, that money for his discharge was lodged at Cox & Co.'s, the Regimental Army Agents, in October 1853 by S. Lepard, Esq., solicitor to E. Trimby, of Mitcham, a MATERNAL AUNT, by whose death the small funds necessary became payable. But Mr Bradlaugh is silent as to who *authorised* the money to be paid. If it were his own property, the first personal pronoun would have been explicitly used. In the absence of a disclosure from either Mr Bradlaugh or his brother, it will be well for my readers to know that Mr Lepard, the solicitor, whose agency was in

voked, was a member of the firm of Messrs Lepard, Gammon & Co., an eminent firm of City Solicitors, in whose service his father was for many years employed as managing and confidential clerk. For several years Mr Bradlaugh has been interrogated with respect to the origin of this "legacy," but he has never yet produced a copy of the Will under which he was a beneficiary, nor has he given a reference to vouch for his statements, which have been contradicted by Mr Packer, supported by the testimony of his own mother, and by that of his own brother, who explicitly denies his assertions.

CHAPTER III.

Strange Contradictions—Solicitor's "Errand Boy"—In Judge's Chambers—Managing Clerk—Lectures on Freethought—Description of Lectures—Legal Experiments—"Crowbar Brigade"—Marries Miss Susan Hooper—Mutual Separation—Becomes active Demagogue—Hyde Park Riots—Bravery—Giving Evidence before Royal Commissioner, etc.

TROOPER CHARLES BRADLAUGH left the 7th Dragoon Guards with a very good character from his Colonel (Ainslie), who, he says, "earned an eternal right to grateful mention at my hands, by his gentlemanly and considerate treatment; but I am bound to say that the captain of my troop would not have concurred in this character had he had any voice in the matter. He did his best to send me to jail, and whom (*sic*) I have not yet quite forgiven." This character was of little avail to procure him employment in London. By his biographical amanuensis, he says, "His first thought on leaving was to assist, as far as possible, in the maintenance of his mother." He does not put this forward in the first person, but, as usual, it appears in the work inspired by the honourable gentleman, which he has publicly certified as a "very accurate biography."* This naïve chronicler adds, "His views on religion had made his

* *National Reformer*, 20th Nov. 1881, p. 401.

parents adopt a course of action which might have thoroughly alienated other and less conscientious children; but no such consideration could influence Bradlaugh's strong sense of duty." This is hardly in accordance with the Rev. Mr Packer's statement, that "his mother has often complained to me, with tearful eyes, of his cruel neglect of her." It is further placed on record, that "as time slipped by, the little store of money he had inherited was melting away, and, far from assisting his family, it seemed as if he himself would soon require assistance." It would certainly be a source of satisfaction to the numerous admirers of the honourable member for Northampton, if these facts of his early life were definitely cleared up by an authoritative statement as to his treatment of his mother; because it is alleged, by those who are conversant with his early history, that there is no truth in his statements respecting his parents, that his mother procured his discharge from the army, and that she derived no advantage from parting with her "savings" to effect his liberty.

He had a difficulty in procuring employment in a solicitor's office. This was to be expected, after his having wasted nearly three years in the army at an age when legal knowledge can be most readily acquired, and retained in the memory. His personal appearance was somewhat against him. He looked like an overgrown lad. Without success, he called at the offices of several solicitors, who had known his father, in quest

of a situation. Amongst others he waited upon a Mr. Thomas Rogers, of Fenchurch Street. To use the parlance of the profession, this gentleman was looked upon as one addicted to "sharp practice," more after the style of Messrs "Dodson & Fogg" than "Sampson Brass, Esq." Mr Rogers had no vacancy for a clerk, but, after the manner of his class, intimated to Mr Bradlaugh that he required an "errand boy." From his acquaintance with the legal profession, Mr Bradlaugh knew that this was the usual remark made by certain solicitors when they wished to obtain a man's service at the salary of a junior clerk. "What wages do you give your errand boy?" inquired the applicant.

"Ten shillings per week," was the reply made by Mr Rogers.

"Then I'll take the situation," rejoined Mr. Bradlaugh, and the engagement was concluded.

With that acuteness which forms a part of his nature, the legal "errand boy" soon proved his ability to act as a clerk. His duties were to attend summonses at Judges' Chambers, serve writs, and manage the various transactions in a common law office. At this time the "Common Law Procedure Act" was coming into operation, on the demise of John Doe and Richard Roe. In a bustling office like Mr Roger's, very little knowledge of the theory of law was required, but it was requisite to know a good deal of what is called "practice" at the public offices. There is a great contrast in the working of the legal business of a general

practitioner and that of an ordinary chancery firm. In the latter some knowledge of legal principles is indispensable. Prior to the amalgamation of Chancery and Common Law in the Judicature Acts of 1874, a London attorney could get on very well, provided he had a sharp clerk, possessed of an unlimited amount of assurance. Under the old system a lawyer's clerk was valuable to his employer, in proportion to his smartness in taking advantage of his opponent at Judges' Chambers. If he could get "substituted service" on a writ, by which the cost of two or three extra affidavits could be filed, and thereby "pile up the agony," in regard to the bill of costs; or, if he succeeded in getting a master's order upon an *ex parte* application, supported by an affidavit of the non-attendance of his opponent, who was for the moment employed in another court, he could command a good salary. If, in addition, he were able to cajole a master into granting him "leave to appear" to a writ under the Bill of Exchange Act on a "fishy affidavit," or to "snap a judgment" in the absence of the defendant's solicitor, he would be invaluable to his employer. Those qualifications, if qualifications they be, were possessed by Mr Bradlaugh. He was fully equal to accomplishing all that an attorney's clerk was expected to do for his master's client. Attendance at Judges' Chambers was to him a personal pleasure. His polemic instincts and debating powers placed him in a superior position to that of any rival whom he had to encounter. Every

Jew lawyer who had curtailed Moses into Moss, and who had converted Levy into Lewis, recognised in Mr Bradlaugh a stalwart foe. When enforcing his eloquent applications on the master or judge, his eyes used to play a curious part. He would, by a species of banter, and by the elevation of his eyebrows, make it appear that his opponent was committing some grand blunder, which the presiding genius was unable to grasp, and who, rather than show his ignorance, or reveal that he had been half asleep, would rapidly scrawl the magic words: "Order," "No Order:" or "Costs, to be Costs in the Cause."

Mr Rogers boasted that his "errand-boy" was a treasure, and his "errand-boy" soon proved his ability to be promoted to the position of "managing clerk." He had nobody to manage, except the traditional office-boy, who plays with the ruler while balancing himself on an office stool. Business came to Mr Thomas Rogers. During the time Mr Bradlaugh remained in his service he gave that satisfaction which success always commands. It was in Mr Rogers' office where he acquired that profound knowledge of Common Law which he has since utilised in so many encounters, both for himself and on behalf of the public. As Mr Rogers' business was not very extensive, Mr Bradlaugh had considerable spare time on his hands, which he spent in trying to augment his fixed salary. He obtained some evening work in connection with a Building Society. Besides this extra employment, his ambition and his

superfluous energies, directed him to deliver lectures in the East End, by which he probably received moderate sums of money. It is alleged that Mr Rogers was at once deluged with anonymous letters, complaining of the ideas and teachings of his infidel clerk. This is an improbable statement, because the number of persons in London who would know of a lawyer's clerk's religion, or want of it, would be infinitesimal, and whatever might be the nature of the "religion," it would not affect in any degree the class of practice carried on by Mr Rogers. Mr Bradlaugh informs us, that his employer treated the anonymous letters with the greatest contempt, and that he simply "asked Bradlaugh not to allow his propaganda to become an injury to the business." This is one of the reasons given to the world why he assumed the name of "Iconoclast," under which *nom de guerre* he lectured from 1855 to 1868.

In addition to his regular employment with Mr Rogers, he now found time to deliver two or three lectures per week, irrespective of his Sunday discourses. He gradually grew popular amongst his party. At that time George Jacob Holyoake was leader of the London Freethinkers, and for politic reasons he disapproved of the style of anti-theological declamation which was used against the clergy. To stand on a public common and deliver a harangue against patriarchal concubinage, or the peculiar laws set out in Leviticus, was considered by the then Secularist leader to be out of place in the present age. The leading

opinion of modern Freethinkers, as well as of modern Scientists, upon this point, is that beside the Ceremonial Law,—which is not binding upon Christians,—there is a great deal in the Scriptures which *exclusively* concerned the ancient Jews, with which we have nothing to do; and that there is very little of the teachings in the New Testament, which have not been incorporated from pre-Christian compositions and pre-Christian religions, and that these teachings form to-day the basis of all existing religions. It is farther contended by cultured Freethinkers, that it would be better for those who cannot accept Christian Theology *en bloc*, to agree with Christians in as many points as possible, instead of differing from them on *all* points. This policy has been repudiated by Mr Bradlaugh. He has learned from his Atheistical associates their system of irritating controversy, and he has used it without reaping satisfactory results. The cardinal principle in the advocacy of Mr Bradlaugh and his School is, to insult the feelings of those whom they profess they are anxious to convince. Accordingly, in the *Reasoner*, the then recognised organ of Secularism, there is little, if any, notice of the class of lectures delivered by “Iconoclast.” They had no more influence on the progress of Free Enquiry, than has the recital in English history of the quarrels of the painted barbarians—our remote ancestors—over the Channel Fleet of to-day. “Iconoclast’s” out-door lectures were, for several years, all of one

genus. They may be described as violent declamations setting out the objections of uneducated persons against the "truth" of the Bible, on account of the contradictions in the concurrent narratives contained in the first and second chapters of Genesis, as to the origin of the world. They held, and still hold, up to ridicule, the Mosaic story of the "Creation." They object to light being in existence before the "creation" of the Sun. They insist upon the narrative of the creation being read as of several literal days of twenty-four hours each. They repudiate the modern, scientific, suggestion of each day being a geological epoch. They treat the fall of Adam as a solar myth. They compare the Noachian flood with that of Deucalion. They deny the possibility of a universal deluge; they criticise antediluvian chronology; they stigmatise the Patriarchs as immoral; they object to the policy of the Mosaic Laws, and they try generally to find contradictions and literal inaccuracies in the Old Testament records.

This was, and is, the staple of all "Iconoclast's" lectures. Educated Freethinkers repudiated such attacks upon the Bible and its defenders. *Their* arguments have always been directed against the supernaturalism of the sacred narratives. They have consistently admitted the moral and religious basis of Christianity; while they have denied the miraculous character of the Saviour, and treated the idea as the natural outgrowth of myth. The main points which have differen-

tiated the School of "Iconoclast" from that of educated Freethinkers are, that the former seek to obtain their end through the agencies of satire, ridicule, and buffoonery; while the latter, disagreeing as they do with the Christian, attack Christianity's dogmatic excrescences, discriminate between what is genuine and what is artificial, separate its morals from its theology, and join on common ground with the Christian upon the whole of the ethical teaching of the Founder or Founders of the Christian Church. This is far in advance of the teachings of the Bradlaughites, who meet in Halls of Science, on public commons, under railway arches, and at street corners, with the design of lacerating the feelings of their opponents by allusions to disgusting biblical subjects. The Scientist, who ignores Christianity as a divinely-appointed religion, is always ready to unite with Christians on the broad ground of the code of morals, extracted from pre-Christian religions, and incorporated into the Gospels.

Viewing, then, the early efforts of "Iconoclast" on this basis, my readers will not be surprised to find that his labours have not been productive of any considerable educated secession from Christianity. Those persons who became detached from the Common Faith, by his ecclesiastical denunciations, have sprung from that section of society which delights in controversy for its own dear sake, and of which the excitable zealots of ultra-protestantism afford the best examples. At the very outset of his career this class of followers attached

themselves to Mr Bradlaugh, and on their finding that he was connected with the law, they frequently availed themselves of his legal knowledge. A curious instance of this happened in respect to a "Working Man's Hall," in Goldsmith's Row, Hackney Road, which had been built on ground without a lease or conveyance from the freeholder. The story points out the legal acumen of Mr Bradlaugh, and explains how, at a very early period in his career, he was in the habit of inaugurating bold legal experiments. The owner of the land proposed to give those political enthusiasts sufficient ground on which to erect a meeting-place, and, in order to more effectually get them into his power, he gave a donation towards the building fund. When the hall was erected, the freeholder took an early opportunity of quarreling with his associates. He asserted his right to the entire building, which, by law, he was justified in doing, in the absence of a proper conveyance. Mr Bradlaugh was consulted. He advised his clients that they had no case. He recommended them to offer "a penalty rent" of £20 per year, to be allowed to retain possession. This offer was refused. It would have been useless to incur legal expenses in trying to enforce a lease from an Equity Court, as no lease had been promised by the freeholder. Mr Bradlaugh took the law into his own hands. He advised the frequenters of the hall to meet together and organise a force which would be sufficient to remove the building *in toto* in a few hours. A vacant piece of ground was procured, to which they determined to cart

the material. Early one morning, about one hundred men congregated together, took forcible possession of the hall, and immediately commenced to ply their pick-axes on the fated building. The woodwork was soon removed. Doors, jambs, and windows were taken away. The gas-piping, and everything of value, was soon detached and hurried off the premises. When this was accomplished, men mounted the roof, unfastened the slates from the rafters and dropped them into the carts below, by which they were conveyed out of the reach of the enemy. Mr Bradlaugh was in the midst of his little army, acting as their legal adviser, but not interfering with the actual building, by way of demolishing it. After the men had been at work a few hours, the alarm was conveyed to the freeholder. He soon arrived on the spot and rushed into the arena, to threaten everybody with legal vengeance. He fetched the police. Mr Bradlaugh denied their right of interference. On going inside the building, the freeholder was affectionately cautioned against the risk of having a slate "accidentally" dropped on his head. He now rushed off to his solicitor, who also hurried to the scene in order to give verbal notice, to any whom it might concern, of an immediate application to the Court of Chancery for a Restraining Injunction. Mr Bradlaugh was still on the ground, as an "innocent spectator." He was, however, acting as a legal adviser to the "Crowbar Brigade." To the bystanders he did not appear to be personally taking any part in the business. Nothing could be done with him.

The solicitor returned to his office to draw an affidavit upon which to found an *ex-parte* Injunction. The affidavit was sworn, counsel briefed, and motion was made to a Vice-Chancellor who granted a restraining order. It had to be served before it could be enforced. By the time the clerk returned for this purpose, the "brave one hundred" had done their work. The freeholder was left in possession of his ground, and the materials of the "Working Men's Hall" had all been removed. Although Mr Bradlaugh has performed many smart and clever actions, perhaps none of them have excelled in thoughtfulness and in calm and deliberate judgment this novel way of procuring justice for poor men who had no *locus standi* in a Court of Law.

Within a few months of his leaving the army, and during the earlier period of his employment with Mr Rogers, Mr Bradlaugh joined the ranks of the Benedicts. The "first girl I ever loved" was speedily forgotten. His nuptials were celebrated with Miss Susan Hooper, a respectable servant girl, whose father, a steady working plasterer, for many years kept a coffee-house adjacent to Leadenhall Market. Miss Hooper prided herself on her attractions, as having been "the prettiest housemaid in Canonbury Square." Three children were born of this union. Two daughters, who are living, and one son, who died at an early age. It would be improper to comment upon the marital relations which existed between Mr and Mrs Bradlaugh, but I may

observe that, at the period when Mr Bradlaugh devoted himself to the advocacy of the "Elements of Social Science," the relations between husband and wife were, to the outer world, of a very strained character, and the strained relationships (ultimately) resulted in a separation, which existed at the death of Mrs Bradlaugh in 1875, prior to Mrs Besant's becoming a *business* partner.

During the year 1855, "Iconoclast" commenced that political agitation which has since formed the greatest labour in his career. At that period, there was not to be found a very prominent London demagogue. Ernest Jones, who had been the principal metropolitan agitator, was worn out by unproductive labour, and overwhelmed with debt. No man was more adored by a section of the people, and yet he was distrusted by the bulk of the working classes. The attacks which he made on Fergus O'Connor, in a novel in which he ridiculed the character of the Chartist leader, had disaffected the remnant of the "Old Guard." Notwithstanding his poetic style, his brilliant word-painting, and the charm with which he invested every subject he touched, the want of personal following showed there was a chasm between Ernest Jones and the agitating Radicals, which could not be bridged. His organ, *The People*, at length collapsed. It could not rival the influence or circulation of *Reynolds' Newspaper*. That was the one drop which to him was more bitter than wormwood. His Chartist satellites would no longer revolve round his leadership. They evolved

new orbits for themselves, before they were finally shattered into fragments by their inability to command an audience capable of influencing the people.

At last Ernest Jones abandoned London Radicalism, when he found that even his magnificent series of lectures on political subjects delivered at St Martin's Hall would not defray expenses. He submitted to fate, and sadly left the metropolis for Manchester, to return to his work as a barrister, and it would have been well for him had he never abandoned the Bar for Politics. He by his profession earned sufficient money to support himself in a sphere of usefulness, at a time when his voice was broken, and when he was but the wreck of his former self. Thomas Cooper, another great speaker, in like manner became exhausted. *He* had also failed to create a position in London. He had changed his religious creed, and the London Radicals looked upon him as a turncoat, although he had fought the bravest fight for freedom of any man who ever defended himself against a prosecution for sedition. For nine days he had held Sir William Follett, the first advocate of the day, at defiance, and, like William Hone, who, fifty years before, broke the heart of Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough, when *he* beat the Government prosecution on the question of the political parodies, as did Cooper shorten the life of Follett. A strange similarity between those two historic Radicals is that both had been Freethinkers, and each of them was reputed to have been re-converted to Christianity. So fickle

was public sentiment, that in either case the public withdrew their sympathy when they observed even an honest change of opinion.

There were a few other men who stood in the front rank of Radicalism, but there was not a single man amongst them who could be considered a modern Cobbett. Charles Bradlaugh, as "Iconoclast," set himself the task of filling this position. He, at that time, had abilities which were eminently suitable for such a rôle. His youth was an advantage which could not be overlooked. Englishmen naturally love a young man who has the daring of his race. His size was another recommendation. An energetic, big man presupposes intellectual ability. All other qualities being equal, "the gods" worship strength. The general run of platform orators amongst the "masses" have been men with more intellect than muscle. Their effeminate appearance has detracted greatly from their brain power. Besides, tall orators are, as a rule, usually lank and phlegmatic. "Iconoclast," on the contrary, was possessed of an energy which stamped itself upon his audience. His voice pealed like the blast of a brazen trumpet over the murmurs of a public meeting. He could neither be hissed down nor coughed down. He was terribly in earnest, while he looked only like an overgrown boy. His manner was awkward, and his greatest enemy could not taunt him with masquerading as a gentleman—a reproach absolutely fatal to many a Radical who has essayed to obtain the suffrages of

Demos. It is only within the last few years that the honourable member has grown portly in appearance, and the charm of his address has been able to banish the awkwardness of his figure. His large head—yet not larger, perhaps, than his massive limbs warrant—his snub nose, and his coarse mouth, could never have been considered as carved on the lines of beauty. Despite, however, of this, “Iconoclast” was possessed of a nameless something which attracted the London mob. At that time the Radicals never dreamt that he would “rat” over to the Whigs. They would have stoned him had they believed that he would one day claim to hold office in an aristocratic government.

The times were favourable for the advent of a new leader, and a subject suddenly surged into the front rank of practical politics which required to be met with organised defeat. The teetotalers and the Sabbatarians joined their forces, and Lord Robert Grosvenor introduced a bill in the Commons to put an end to Sunday trading. For many years there had been an attempt in various towns to persecute news-vendors and apple-women who sold their goods on the Sabbath. In some towns barbers were prosecuted for scraping chins on Sunday, under the authority of the Lord’s Day Act, passed in the reign of that most religious king—Charles II. Sometimes the magistrates fined the defendants the full penalty of five shillings, while on other occasions they inflicted only a penny fine. When the persecution grew intolerant, the barbers, news-

vendors, and apple-women turned the tables, and prosecuted the coachmen of the magistrates for driving "their worships" to church on Sunday, as that was "following *their* ordinary occupation on the Lord's Day;" and in such manner this obnoxious Act was paralysed. Lord Robert Grosvenor's bill went far beyond this. He aimed at not only preventing the poor man from having his beer on Sunday, but he actually wanted to prevent his having his food cooked at the bake-house. The costermongers of the metropolis rose in arms against the Bill. Charles Dickens wrote one of his most telling articles on the bigotry of the Sabbatarians, while George Jacob Holyoake penned a tractate on "The Rich Man's Sunday and The Poor Man's Sunday." Mr Holyoake's tractate had an immense circulation amongst those who were affected by such proposed legislation. The first of the great modern demonstrations in Hyde Park was organised, to protest against the bigotry of the supporters of Lord Robert Grosvenor. On Sunday, the 24th June 1855, the carriages of the aristocracy, and the cavalcade in Rotten Row, were hissed by the people who had assembled to protest against the proposed repressive legislation. A meeting was called for the following Sunday (July 1st), to further show the futility of such measures, when, to the surprise of constitutional lawyers, a police proclamation appeared, warning the public that such proposed meeting was illegal, and would be suppressed. There was a concensus of legal opinion that Sir Richard

Mayne had no authority vested in him, as Commissioner of Police, to proclaim such meeting, and it was determined to test his right to issue such a police ukase.

At the time announced, both the people and the police were ready for the encounter. It was the first of the great struggles to determine as to whether Hyde Park belonged to the "Classes" or the "Masses." The "Season" was at its height, and the people, fearfully exasperated, hissed and hooted the aristocrats. Their high-spirited horses began to prance. The premonitory symptoms of a revolt were experienced. The police charged the crowd. Rioting commenced. Arrests were made. The police stations were crammed with prisoners. As one of the organisers, Bradlaugh was in the Park watching the scene. He observed in one place no fewer than five policemen striking a man with their batons. He sprang to the side of their prisoner, dashed away one of the constable's staves, and with his stentorian voice shouted: "The next man that strikes, I will knock him down." This had the required effect. The prisoner was marched quietly off to gaol without undergoing any further maltreatment. Shortly after this occurrence, Leonoclast was ordered to "move on," by a constable, who prodded him with his truncheon. He coolly told the official to desist, adding that he had no right to do this, and mentioning that he was stronger than the officer. Unable to comprehend such language, and having respect for his stature, the policeman called two

of his comrades to his assistance. Iconoclast's military training served him in good stead. He speedily disarmed two constables in their truncheon arm, and threatened the third that if he interfered he would take one of the staves from one of the officers he had disarmed, and knock him down. The force beat a masterly retreat. The Government was alarmed. Lord Robert Grosvenor's bill was ignominiously withdrawn. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the police brutalities. Some valuable evidence was given by Mr Bradlaugh before the Royal Commissioner—the Right Honourable Stuart Wortley—as to what he saw and heard. He denied the legal authority of Sir Richard Mayne to issue such a proclamation. When asked by the Commissioner if he had been roughly treated by a mounted policeman, he replied he certainly had not otherwise he should have dismounted him. This officer gave a very significant expression of contempt at such a remark. Iconoclast noticed his horse standing at the door, and with quiet insinuatory suggestiveness proposed to the Commissioner that the officer should go outside and mount his charger, when he (Iconoclast) would “dismount” him before the Court. This offer on the part of Mr Bradlaugh was not accepted. It might have proved too dangerous an experiment to teach the Radicals how to defend themselves in future Hyde Park Riots. At the close of his evidence, the Royal Commissioner publicly thanked Mr Bradlaugh; and, when he left the Court, he refused

an ovation from those present, whose liberties he had defended upon purely civil grounds.

This was the first of a long succession of legal triumphs, and it proved of the utmost value in implanting an idea into the minds of the people that the public parks were meant for the use of the people as political tribunals as well as pleasure grounds for all sections of the inhabitants of London. It was an attempt on the part of the Government to deny the right of the poor to hold meetings of any kind which might be offensive to the aristocratic prejudices of the West End. It brought to recollection the sage advice which Sir Robert Walpole gave to the second of our Hanoverian Queens, who asked the Prime Minister what would be the cost of enclosing the whole of Hyde Park, which Queen Caroline wished to preserve for her own Royal pleasure. "It would only cost your Majesty—a *Crown*," was the quiet reply.

That meeting of the 1st July 1855 is one of historic importance. Had the people wavered in their demand to discuss their grievances there and then, and had they yielded to the edict of Sir Richard Mayne, a precedent would have been created which would have been enforced at a later date, and that series of magnificent demonstrations which have been held during the last quarter of a century in the political *Champs de Mars* of England, would have been impossible. They have proved in our time the safety-valve of the nation; and no person deserves more credit than

does Mr Charles Bradlaugh, for vindicating the legal right to hold such meetings in Hyde Park. The wonder is, that a young man of two-and-twenty years of age could have the temerity to conceive of such a method, and the skill to preserve his self-possession during such a novel scene.

In quite a recent letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, claiming the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square, Mr Bradlaugh inferentially reminded his friends of how many bold doctrines he had silently dropped, the nearer he reached the goal of an official salary, when intimation had been given to him that if he sold his influence to Mr Gladstone, he might hope for a place in the next Cabinet. Whether any bargain was made can be known only to the negotiants; but it is refreshing to find Mr Bradlaugh preserving even this relic of his early days, after the wholesale trimming he had indulged in of late. He won his early reputation by his desire for Fame. His riper wisdom, although he passionately longs for Fame, still stoops for Money.

CHAPTER IV.

Quits Employment of Mr Rogers and becomes nominally articulated to a Mr Harvey—Harvey imprisoned—Alleged that Bradlaugh was the means of detaining Him in Prison—Harvey's Son walks from North Wales to Bradlaugh's House in Tottenham to intercede for his Father's Release—The Youth's Supplications not entertained—Enters into Treaty with a Jew Solicitor, a Mr Leverson—Leverson complains of Misplaced Confidence in Bradlaugh—Leverson subsequently escapes from out the Jurisdiction of the English Courts—Rumoured that Information which would prevent Bradlaugh's being admitted as a Solicitor was lodged at the Law Institution—Abandons Legal Career and becomes a Company Promoter—His first anti-Christian Work—The Holyoake "Institution"—Holyoake Boycotting—Description of "Iconoclast," internally and externally, by a Young Freethinker, thirty years ago—His first Provincial Debate.

AFTER Mr Bradlaugh had served in the office of Mr Rogers about three years, he concluded that he had acquired a sufficient stock of legal knowledge to enable him to start in practice for himself, under the cover of the qualification of a Mr Harvey, to whom he nominally "articled" himself. It does not anywhere appear that those articles were duly enrolled in the Court of Queen's Bench, which was necessary in order to give them validity. The payment of £80, as stamp duty, is a condition precedent to this formality, without which the clerk is not permitted to pass his intermediate examination. If the duty were not paid, it is probable

that the articles were executed in the anticipation of subsequent enrolment by a Judge's order, after the duty and "penalty" had been paid—a privilege formerly granted to impecunious aspirants in the lower branch of the legal profession, who could make out a satisfactory excuse for their articles not being stamped before execution. It would be interesting to know whether Mr Bradlaugh really passed his "preliminary," for unless he did so, time would not run on his articles. It would also be gratifying to learn as to whether he obtained a "dispensation" from one of the then Chiefs of the Common Law Courts, who, jointly with the Master of the Rolls, had power to waive the passing of the "preliminary" to clerks who might not be able to pass the requisite "exam." With the mental acquirements of Mr Bradlaugh, there could be no possible doubt as to his ability to obtain the examiner's certificate had he tried for it. He would not have been entitled to have articulated himself as a "ten years'" clerk, by which his service would have been only three instead of five years. But it was nominally an improved position to be an "articled" clerk. Any solicitor destitute of practice, but clothed with a certificate, would have been willing to take an assistant with the abilities of Mr Bradlaugh as an "articled" clerk. It is contrary to law for a solicitor to have an "unqualified" partner, or to divide his profits with his clerk, or with a person who introduces business. The general arrangement made between a clever attorney's clerk and a solicitor

without practice is for the clerk to employ the master, and not the master the clerk. In other words, the clerk takes out the master's certificate, for which he pays a duty of £9 per year, and practices in his principal's name. The principal is alone responsible to the client and the Law Society. Those practising by this means manage to get a stipend, while the clerk who finds the brains takes the proceeds, leaving the "solicitor" the risk of being struck off the Rolls. When, in addition, "articles" are given, the "articled" clerk (?) assumes a social dignity which is denied to those who have not been enrolled as legal apprentices.

From what is known of the peculiar business carried on by Mr Harvey, it is assumed that an arrangement of this kind was made with his clerk. It was the epoch of Joint Stock Companies. Mr Harvey was a promoter. He owned the Tal-y-sarn Slate Quarries. Other concerns of a similar kind were attempted to be set afloat in various forms. Neither Mr Harvey's nor Mr Bradlaugh's connection with them was altogether satisfactory to those who exchanged solid sovereigns for paper shares. A great number of schemes issued from the office of Mr Harvey which ended very unfortunately for the nominal head of the firm. Mr Bradlaugh was the one who transacted the business, but Mr Harvey was the individual who had to answer to clients and creditors. He was compelled by his position to be silent, because, had he disclosed his real arrangements with his clerk, he could not have

divested himself of responsibility, while the penalty would have been exacted of being "struck off the Rolls." The end of this blending of interests was that Mr Harvey was lodged in a debtor's prison for debts which he said had been contracted in his name by his clever clerk, or through his agency. The coalition was broken up. It was alleged by Mr Harvey's friends that Mr Bradlaugh had something to do with persuading the creditor to arrest Mr Harvey, and get "detainers" lodged against him, in order to prevent him from obtaining his discharge. Mr Bradlaugh, by his biographical amanuensis, says,—“Mr Harvey was plunged into money difficulties, and his arrangement with Bradlaugh was not only brought by force of circumstances to a premature end, but Bradlaugh found himself involved in considerable pecuniary difficulties.” This statement is correct, but it is an injustice to throw the blame on Mr Harvey for the failure of speculations which were beyond the ordinary scope of the transactions of a solicitor.

The family of Mr Harvey thought that he had been badly used by his "articled" clerk. On one memorable Sunday, a genteel, well-educated youth of prepossessing manners made his appearance at Elysium Villa, Northumberland Park, Tottenham, to implore justice from Mr Bradlaugh for his father, who seemed destined to rot in a gaol. This unfortunate young man had walked from North Wales to Tottenham, to plead for his father's release from prison. He pleaded in vain. Perhaps Mr Bradlaugh was not Mr Harvey's detaining creditor, but,

if not, he was the instrument of his detention in gaol. He found it convenient to have a scapegoat who would be an intermediary for bearing his sins to the wilderness. At that time the scapegoat was Mr Harvey. I am told that those who saw this youth on his filial errand of mercy have never yet been able to banish the ugly picture from their minds.

Mr Bradlaugh entered into arrangements with another solicitor, under articles. This gentleman, Mr Leverson, at one time bulked largely in professional circles. He was a relative of Madame Rachel, of "Beautiful for Ever" notoriety. The transactions between Mr Leverson and Mr Bradlaugh have not been published. Doubtless the Infidel clerk was equal in *finesse* to his Jew employer. Mr Leverson shrieked loudly to his friends as to misplaced confidence, but he made no effort to have his wrongs redressed by judge or jury. Rather hurriedly he disappeared from the jurisdiction of our Courts—criminal as well as civil, so, whatever were his grievances, he never disclosed them where they could be duly considered. Some persons have gone so far as to say that complaints were lodged at the Law Institution which would have seriously jeopardised the chances of Mr Bradlaugh's being admitted as a solicitor if he had completed service under his "articles," and duly complied with the statutes relative to the admission of attorneys and solicitors. If this suspicion be correct, it may account for the fact that Mr Bradlaugh refrained from applying to be "admitted." It is only fair

to conclude that Mr Bradlaugh would have been pleased to become a legally-qualified member of an honourable profession, where he could have made more money than if he had been "called to the Bar," and where his splendid abilities would have given him a position of influence which would have made him a real power amongst the English lawyers.

After Mr Bradlaugh had abandoned his legal career, he entered into the congenial occupation of "Company promoting." His transactions with the "Naples Oil and Colour Works," *et hoc genus omne*, are not to be found in any of the authorised accounts of his life, and it is not likely that they will be disinterred at the instigation of the honourable member. I will therefore retrace my steps, to describe the public career of Mr Bradlaugh from the period when he filled in his spare time as a lawyer's clerk.

To keep himself before the Freethinking public, he started the issue of a series of argumentative pamphlets, which he styled a "Commentary on the Pentateuch." This work subsequently merged into "The Bible: What is It?" The work appeared at intermittent periods. It is a *réchauffé* of anti-biblical attacks on the Mosaic narrative, the facts being principally cribbed from a work published many years previously under the title of "A Hunt after the Devil." This book is a kind of carping commentary, in the form of an encyclopædia of objections similar to those which were afterwards put into shape by Bishop Colenso, and they

related to an extinct style of theological argument, by which verbal contradictions in the text of the Pentateuch were duly trotted out to prove that the *ipsissima verba* of the Old Testament were not to be relied upon. So long as the belief remained in the minds of imperfectly-educated ministers that every line of the Scriptures was verbally inspired, this class of argument was considered effective. Mr Bradlaugh has never had the opportunity of studying the Modern School of Scriptural exegesis, and he has considered that every apparent "contradiction" in the Hebrew chronology or history is fatal to the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. He doubtless considered that his tracts were of powerful effect in accentuating the destruction of belief in Christianity. His hopes were rudely blasted by his finding that, even amongst his admirers, "The Bible: What is It?" failed to find readers. It was his first work. It gives a fair idea of the cast of his mind in dealing with the subject which he has made a life-study. Other Infidel writers have made destructive criticism readable, but "Iconoclast" was destitute of the ability to attract readers to a theme which seldom occupies the attention of laymen. His earlier books were simply written speeches where they were not bald compilations, as in the "Half Hours With Free-thinkers," a work which had and still retains some popularity. This treatise, of which two volumes were published, was the work of "Iconoclast," John Watts, and "Anthony Collins." It represented, I am informed,

an episode of publishing spite, which I explain, for the purpose of showing the usual *modus operandi* of Infidel propaganda.

Mr G. J. Holyoake, while posing as the leader of the Freethought party, had represented to his friends the necessity of having a book-shop in London, which was to be called an "Institution." His supporters were asked to find funds to carry it on. It was to be not only a place where Freethought literature was to be vended, but it was to be a point which all wandering Infidels should make to when in London. It was started before popular clubs were invented, and was defined to be something of a marvel in disseminating liberal thought. The shopmen were to be selected apostles who would uphold the dignity of Secularism. Amongst them was an ex-Rev. Frederic Rowland Young, who afterwards blossomed into a Reverend D.D. Austin Holyoake was the Deputy-Director through whom the ministrations of Mr George Jacob Holyoake percolated to the esoteric circle of the elect who worshipped the founder of Secularism. Mr John Watts had charge of the printing arrangements, while the whole establishment was intended to become the nucleus for worshipping the Holyoake cult of Freethought. The usual result of such a programme followed. All other workers in the field of Freethought were ignored, if they did not pay sufficient deference to the originator of the Secularist worship. The pamphlets of Charles Southwell were damned with faint praise in the *Reasoner*, while

orders for their supply were delayed or not executed. Mr Robert Cooper's works were practically tabooed, and his Journal, *The London Investigator*, could not be procured by those news-vendors who purchased their goods through the "Institution," which was to elevate Free-thought into a medium of propagandism. This caused great dissatisfaction amongst the followers of the then leading advocates of Freethought who repudiated the new-fangled theory of Secularism and the rhetorical platitudes of its founder. At that time, several works were appearing under the title of "Cabinet of Reason Series," which appealed to the sympathies of advanced thinkers. "Anthony Collins" was anxious to publish a work which he had written on the "History of Freethought," as one of the "Cabinet of Reason Series," but the terms quoted by Mr Austin Holyoake were commercially prohibitive. This young author announced, in the *Yorkshire Tribune* (a Freethought monthly magazine), the issue of his work through another channel; when the directors of the "Holyoake Institution" instigated the publication of a rival work, under the title of "Half-hours with the Freethinkers," by John Watts and "Iconoclast." Owing to the limited circulation of this class of literature, there would have been no sale for an original work if a fortnightly series of pamphlets on the same subjects had appeared simultaneously. A protest being made, Mr Austin Holyoake offered "Anthony Collins" a share in their production, and, in consequence, the series appeared by the three writers. One of the articles, by "Icono-

clast," on Spinoza, showed some original talent. This was really his first introduction to the particular class whose suffrages have since assisted him to climb into Parliament.

At that time Austin Holyoake was overshadowed by the reputation of his brother. John Watts was an able, popular speaker, possessing fair debating powers, a pleasant delivery, and the faculty of making friends wherever he appeared. I shall have to refer again to John Watts as an important factor in Freethought journalism. At this stage, it will assist my readers if I give a sketch of "Iconoclast's" appearance and method, from one who, thirty years ago, had intimate relations with him and the then younger branch of the anti-religious party:—

"My first introduction to Charles Bradlaugh was in the summer of 1858, when I paid a short visit to London, and enjoyed the hospitality of my dear friend Robert Cooper, who was then the editor of the London *Investigator*. He had recently received a legacy from Mr Fletcher, and was living in Clarendon Road, Notting Hill. I was then about twenty-two years of age, and rather proud that I had 'beaten the record' of every other anti-Christian by publishing more literature than any other neophyte of my own age. I had a very high opinion of Mr Robert Cooper's personal character, while his published lectures on the 'Immortality of the Soul,' 'Holy Scriptures Analysed,' and 'Infidel's Text Book,' placed him far above any of his contemporaries in the Freethought propaganda. I was at that age when a devoted young man is anxious to be enrolled in the noble army of martyrs, in the defence of opinions with which he had become identified, and which are considered too advanced or too dangerous to be adopted by the public, who prefer to travel on easy pathways. I was anxious, in the few days of my visit to London, to become acquainted with the men and women who had publicly renounced

Christianity. At that time, such renunciation was very different to the present era, when no more notice is taken of an Atheist than a Radical. It was very different in my youth, for, immediately upon my embracing liberal views on theological subjects, I had been proscribed by my friends, pointed at by my opponents, held up as a warning by the clergy, and shunned by all who wished to preserve a reputation for the respect of Christians. From my sixteenth year, I had mixed with all the wandering stars of political and literary progress who had come within the orbit of my influence. I had personally known workmen who had been compelled to disguise themselves in order to attend the Socialistic meetings of Robert Owen, this being the only method to prevent the loss of their employment. They were 'boycotted' by their employers, before 'boycotting' was known as an Irish science. I was acquainted with Chartists who had been imprisoned with Thomas Cooper; Ten-hours'-labour Advocates, who had fought with Richard Oastler, long before this pioneer of factory redemption was sent to the Fleet Prison, and made way for Lord Ashley to become the parliamentary representative who carried the charter of the factory labourer. I had stood by the side of Ernest Jones, when for five hours he had delivered an oration against Sir Charles Wood at the Cloth Hall, Halifax. For years I had joined in that unrecorded agitation which commenced in the Crimean War, when the picked men of the old Socialists and Chartists were interviewed by David Urquhart, and converted into Foreign Affairs Inquiry Societies, remnants of which still exist. I had identified myself with every out-door demonstration in Yorkshire and Lancashire which extreme Reformers had organised, and I had carried my views beyond those of the ordinary Radicals, to the extent of invariably moving an amendment, when the resolution for manhood suffrage was put to a Chartist meeting, by proposing 'person' should be substituted for 'manhood,' in order to give women the same right to vote as men. With the Freethinking section of Reformers I had thrown in my lot, and was acquainted with all the leading representatives of aggressive Atheism. I was associated with Mr Holyoake's party, and on this my first visit to London, I wished to be introduced to the younger men who were coming to the front as champions of Freethought.

"Mr Robert Cooper did his best to gratify my desire. 'Icono-

clast' was to lecture at the John Street Institution on the Sunday. I became his guest, and it had been previously arranged that I should meet Mr and Mrs Bradlaugh, prior to hearing him address an audience. He was then only known as an aspiring young speaker who was a thorn in the flesh of city missionaries. When he entered the room, I cannot say that I was favourably impressed with his features. He had a slouching gait which reduced his stature, and he appeared to be one of the drill-sergeant's failures. There was nothing of the smart appearance, erect carriage, and springing step which marks the cavalry soldier. There were no traces of culture, such as might be expected to appear in a young man who had graduated in the self-taught school of personal experience. His ponderous jaws gave an idea of shark-like power, which was accentuated by the eager manner in which he turned a general conversation into an instructive debate. When in repose, his features were almost repulsive by their coarseness. His nose was not proportionate in profile to the rest of his countenance. His thick projecting upper lip was then even more pronounced than now, when it is so well known through the caricatures of the comic journals, while his mouth was sternly set, without a wave line of poetry or humour. His clothing was the same fashion as he has since adopted—a black frock coat, single-breasted vest, and trousers which showed signs that 'Iconoclast' was by no means exacting in the qualifications of his tailor.

"When our host entered into conversational criticism on the new phases of philosophical thought, then the topic of society, I observed that 'Iconoclast' listened without appearing to comprehend the subjects which attracted the attention of the guests. Mrs Robert Cooper, a lady whose graceful tact was beyond praise, observing that 'Iconoclast' could not enter into the subjects familiar to the rest of the company, delicately changed the current of conversation, and drew him out, by inquiries as to his out-door propaganda amongst the biblical controversialists. This at once aroused his interest. His eyes sparkled as he recited his triumphs over itinerating evangelists. He related his adventures in Coffee-house discussions, and mentioned that he intended taking the field as an Infidel lecturer in the provinces, where he anticipated being able to fill up the niche left vacant by Charles Southwell, the favourite Infidel advocate, who had then lately emigrated to Australia.

"At that interview I grasped his full character, and while recognising his valour as a soldier of Freethought, I felt pained at the intense egotism of the youthful lecturer. I was anxious to fathom the extent of his educational and literary qualifications. The subject of the 'Immortality of the Soul' came up, in reference to a new edition of Lectures which Mr Robert Cooper was preparing for the press, and I was greatly surprised at the paucity of knowledge possessed by 'Iconoclast' upon this subject. The conversation had drifted from the writings of William Maccall, a distinguished literary man, who was then the leader of the sect of 'Individualists.' Mr Maccall had, in our organs, taken up the gauntlet of Scotch Ontology, which brought at issue the metaphysical speculations of Berkeley and Hume with those of modern materialists who rely upon Laurence and Coombe; and we were mutually interested upon the arguments as to the unsolved dogma of the Materiality of the Mind. I ventured to make the objection that the whole of the arguments put forward by the Atheistic party would have to be re-cast to meet the new phases of physiological phenomena of what has since been known as 'Spiritualism,'—that the dry logical *à priori* propositions which had hitherto been considered to prove the mind was 'immaterial,' and therefore must be 'spiritual,' were at an end, and that the Christian idea of a future life would have to be supported or combated by reference to physiological experiments. I soon found that 'Iconoclast' had not studied those subjects. He was unable to enter into argument, either in defence or opposition, upon theories which had reference to either Kant, Reid, or Macintosh. His mind was only saturated with textual contradictions of the Pentateuch, and he seemed never to have considered the tendency of Hebrew Sadduceism towards the comity of thought which was in antagonism to the Platonic Metaphysics of the age of the Apostles. In opposition to those, he commenced to portray the horrors of Hell, as if engaged in one of his favourite lectures; but when it was suggested that the tone of Jewish thought negatived such a theory, and that Warburton's 'Divine Legation of Moses' was established upon the foundation of the Materiality of the Mind, he admitted he had never heard of Warburton; and when I interrogated him on the Deistic Controversies of the eighteenth century, he acknowledged that he had never read any of the great ecclesiastic authors who had built up English theology. He coolly said

his reading had been confined to matters which he selected for his lectures.

"I came to the conclusion that his literary studies were founded upon the maxim of our great classical scholar, Dr Bentley, who, on observing his son perusing a novel, rebuked him by saying,— 'My son, never read a book you cannot quote.'

"I heard for the first time that evening the peculiar eloquence of 'Iconoclast.' It was an old story. It was an hour of hypercritical analysis of Mosaic texts. It pleased the audience, who took their quantum of anti-biblical criticism as other people in the same neighbourhood take their quantum of gin. It was a fair sample of the orations of 'Iconoclast.' He supplied then, as now, a kind of excitement which is dispensed elsewhere by Salvation Armies and sensational preachers. An *educated* audience could not listen to such harangues, if frequently repeated. His opponents were of such a low mental calibre as to give a stranger the impression that they were hired to create ridicule, in order to attract an assembly in the interests of the nearest gin palace. At that meeting, I first heard the peculiar bathos of the lecturer, which for years formed the staple of his perorations. 'He was *not* a leader; he was simply a STANDARD BEARER,' which expression for several years alternated with his 'standing on the lowest rung of the ladder.' His youthful appearance told greatly in his favour. Till he reached the age of thirty years, he had the appearance of an overgrown boy. His lecture on the night I refer to was subsequently delivered for ten or fifteen years without any variation except in the title. There was in it an absolute absence of all argument, which was, however, replaced by a running commentary on the iniquities of the Hebrews in Canaan. There was absolutely nothing which would carry conviction to the mind of a person who had the elements of a Scriptural training. There was much that was attractive in the manner of 'Iconoclast' on the platform. His sincerity seemed unquestionable. His energy was unbounded, and his enthusiasm carried his audience away. I left that meeting with the prophetic feeling that 'Iconoclast,' as a Freethought lecturer, would succeed where better men had failed. My prophecy has been realised."

Soon after the period above described, "Iconoclast" commenced to deliver lectures at Sheffield, and he became

very popular amongst the acute Sceptics who kept possession of their Hall of Science long after the Socialists in other towns had surrendered their places of meeting to the Unitarians, who, as a rule, endeavoured to succeed in obtaining a footing by gaining the support and adhesion of the more intelligent of those theological Ishmaels. There was at that time residing in Sheffield a polemic Congregational minister who devoted his talents to dealing with the Secularist party. He was, without exception, the most difficult opponent the fighting Infidels ever had to encounter. This clergyman—Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A.—had, some time previously, been engaged on a “three years’ mission” attacking Secularists in their strongholds. He was by no means the usual type of a Christian minister. He had an unrivalled acquaintance with every portion of the literature of Atheism. He knew the personal character of all the Atheist leaders, and could speak *ex cathedra* on the sayings and doings of the Party. He called himself the “master of the platform;” and indeed there was none who could fairly match him in satire, sarcasm, and fun. What to others were formidable difficulties in Scripture, were readily simplified by this indefatigable divine. He was ever and anon rollicking in fun. At the close of the lectures and debates there was generally a scene of the wildest excitement, and the newspapers frequently headed their reports as a “Debate between *two* Infidels.”

Mr Grant had had a set debate at Glasgow with Mr George Jacob Holyoake, upon Secularism, which,

when published, had a large sale and wide circulation. He had met Mr Joseph Barker on the platform at Halifax, and even his pachydermatous skin was pierced by the raillery of the fighting parson. A challenge was given for a public debate in Sheffield between "Iconoclast" and Brewin Grant, which was accepted. This was really the first appearance of Mr Bradlaugh before a provincial audience of repute, and it formed the foundation-stone of his reputation.

I will now proceed to describe this debate, as Mr Grant has, since that time, been a champion of such prowess as Mr Bradlaugh has not cared to meet, either on a public platform or in the courts of law.

CHAPTER V.

Little or no Improvement within the last Thirty Years in the Matter and Style of his Debates—Extract from the Sheffield Debate of June 1858, between the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., and "Iconoclast," on "The God of the Bible"—Another Extract displaying his Scholarship, Strategy, and the whole Armour of his anti-Christian Warfare—Effect of Debate.

THOSE who have studied the works of Mr Bradlaugh, as mere literary or journalistic efforts, see very little improvement in either their matter or style when comparing the writings of his maturer years with the fierce diatribes of his earlier youth. Like Minerva, he seems to have sprung into public existence fully grown. The doctrine of mental evolution has been ignored in his life. He is a man who has shown himself to be utterly destitute of creative genius, while he exudes with cleverness, and his tact bears witness that he can adapt the ideas of others, but can never do more than re-state the propositions which he has already absorbed. In politics, the changing subjects of the hour afford an opportunity to *appear* original, on account of the facilities which exist to adapt popular ideas. The "Iconoclast" of 1858 and the Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., of 1888 show no signs of improvement either in ideas or in impressing them upon an audience. The only noticeable difference is that in 1858 "Iconoclast" had not learnt to "trim." He was,

to use his own expression, on the "bottom rung of the ladder," and his utterances were not shackled by the expectation of becoming a member of Her Majesty's Government. The Sheffield Debate of this date affords the fairest specimen of Mr Bradlaugh's polemical capabilities which it is possible to select from his multifarious writings, and it is doing no injustice to Mr Bradlaugh to say that they still remain the most correct example of his theological and platform criticisms. In the thirty years which have since elapsed, he has been engaged in all kinds of debates, with divines and laymen; but the first controversy with the Rev. Brewin Grant is still the most explicit of his labours, and will bear reproduction, because it gives the public the most exhaustive information as to the manner in which "Iconoclast" tilted against the bulwarks of Christianity. It was his original starting-point, and at the present day he has not got beyond the crude weapons he used in his first encounter. There were four nights spent in discussion. The subjects of debate were:—

1. "THE GOD OF THE BIBLE, REVENGEFUL, INCONSTANT, UNMERCIFUL, AND UNJUST.—HIS ATTRIBUTES PROVEN TO BE CONTRADICTED BY THE BOOK WHICH IS PROFESSED TO REVEAL THEM." (*Affirmative*, "ICONOCLAST.")
2. "IS THE BIBLE HISTORY OF CREATION CONSISTENT WITH ITSELF, AND WITH SCIENCE?" (*Affirmative*, Rev. BREWIN GRANT.)
3. "IS THE BIBLE HISTORY OF THE DELUGE CONSISTENT, AND PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE?" (*Affirmative*, Rev. BREWIN GRANT.)
4. "'ICONOCLAST,' AS A COMMENTATOR ON THE BIBLE, DEFICIENT IN LEARNING, LOGIC, AND FAIRNESS; PROVED BY HIS

ATTEMPT CALLED 'THE BIBLE: WHAT IS IT??' (*Affirmative*, Rev. BREWIN GRANT.)

Of the foregoing I shall give only extracts from the first night's debate, because it is the most coherent and effective of all Mr Bradlaugh's attacks upon Christianity. Upon this occasion he had to state his case without interruption, which was, what it appeared to be, an impeachment of the Deity of the Bible. He had a splendid audience to receive him, and few young men could have had such an introduction to public life. It was the commencement of a career which has been continuous in its anti-Christian warfare from that period. In his opening speech he said:—

"I am to submit that the God of the Bible is a God of a particular character, and that His character as there detailed is revengeful, inconsistent, unmerciful, unjust. I know this will clash with many of your ideas (*sic*). But what idea have you formed of God? You were taught in your cradle, before you could utter words, to clasp your hands, to kneel, to pray, before you knew what prayer meant, and before you knew the meaning of words. At school, in every book, you found the word of God (*sic*). It was connected with everything. You heard perpetually of the hand of God, the finger of God, the works of God. The school was followed up by the college and the church. The word (*sic*) has thus been impressed upon you day after day, till it has seemed to be part of that to which it is only an addition (*sic*). It (?) is taken for an innate idea, and the man who doubts it is said to blaspheme. But now we have to deal not with this word or with that, but the character of the God of the Bible as detailed in this book. By these words (*sic*) we are to judge. I may be told that I judge harshly of these words, and that some of them are not now capable of bearing the same meaning as they once did. We may be told that these words were addressed to a debased and ignorant people. But surely God who revealed His will to man, should have used language true and applicable to all times. But who shall thus blaspheme,—who shall pretend to say God's people in God's

time were incapable of understanding God's language as it should be understood? Who shall say that God, who, they tell us, made the world,—the God who, as they tell us, revealed this book to guide men to everlasting happiness, who shall dare say He gave forth a revelation in such language as He must have known the world would some time have grown above and beyond? Surely he would be a bold man who said (*sic*) so,—bolder than I, who shall take the words for what they mean, and from that meaning endeavour to deduce my proposition (*sic*). The first text I will submit to you is Genesis, chap. vi., ver. 1 to 7 inclusive:—‘And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.’ My question to-night is not, is this book a revelation from God? My question is not, have men misrepresented the deity? My question is not, is part of this book a forgery and the rest a reality; is part untruth and the rest truth? But my question is, is the God of the Bible as pictured here what I say He is? And now from (*sic*) this terrible preface, what shall we add? Can any man tell me that the picture (*sic*) of a whole world, of all its inhabitants, all living, breathing, moving things suddenly destroyed, is not at least a tremendous punishment (*sic*), which should strike us with horror and amazement? Any man of thought, with even one particle of what we call the feelings of humanity within him, will at least be sorry that so many should so die—will think upon it, and what led to it, why it was, and what God intended by it. We have here not the mere act of a man, but the representation of God. And this representation is not only not in accordance with some other parts of Scripture, but contrary to the best concep-

tions in the relation to the Deity. In this book, where man's highest aspirations should be surpassed, and his noblest thoughts transcended, we find the order reversed. The whole of the attributes of Deity are impugned, and the arrangements of divine intelligence are represented, not even after the manner of human wisdom, but of human folly. You have a picture of a Deity (Genesis, chap i. v. 31) who only a little while before reviews his work of creation, and pronounced his opinion that everything was very good; yet in a short period the same Deity looks round and declares that man is so bad that 'he repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart;' and in consequence, God, to relieve himself from this source of grief, determined to destroy every living thing, and he did destroy them by deluge, for it repented him that he had made them, because man was so very wicked. Repented! and this of the God of the Bible, who can never repent! Either God foreknew man's wickedness, and was always grieved, or God has not foreknowledge. But what could be the object, what effect, what good, what usefulness, attends this tremendous punishment, this sweeping away of man and beast too? 'The thoughts of men's hearts were evil continually;' therefore God destroyed both man and beast. I don't know whether the beasts were affected in a similar way. 'It repented him that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart.' What causes grief? Is it that which has always been known, or is it not that when misfortune comes suddenly upon us? We lose a dear friend, or fail in an undertaking, and we grieve. But God, before ever he created the world—if he created it at all—foreknew the wickedness of man. The knowledge must have brought with it the grief, and if God was grieved when he knew man's wickedness, after it occurred he must have been equally grieved when he foreknew it before its occurrence. Therefore, either the grief affects God not at all, or it equally affects him the whole time he has knowledge of the circumstances. No doubt there was some good reason for their destruction, but it does not appear on the face of the Bible. Man's thoughts are evil, man's deeds wicked; therefore God destroys both man and beast. And why? All punishment, to be useful, should have the effect to preventing a recurrence of the evil. Had the deluge such an effect? Did God expect that it would have such an effect? I need not go over the details of the flood. You will remember that, with

the exception of one family, every living being is destroyed. This tremendous primitive act must strike every one with horror and astonishment—did it produce the effect desired? Man was wicked before the flood, and so conscious was the Deity of the usefulness of the punishment, that immediately after he had destroyed the whole human family he says, ‘I will no more destroy man because the deeds of his heart are evil continually.’ But God made man—so they say—God made him with the powers he possessed. God made him what he was, in his own image, surrounded by circumstances which he controlled. Ere man was created, ere the universe was made, God knew that man should sin. God foreknew this terrible punishment of old and young, of grey-haired men and children scarce able to prattle. God foreknew all should be destroyed, that man and beast should all be swept away. He foreknew all this and the uselessness of this terrible punishment. He knew that Noah, the best amongst these wicked men, would be so little affected by this terrible punishment—if it ever happened—that immediately after he leaves the ark, he inaugurates his new life with an act of foolishness, if not of crime. Will you tell me that this God of the Bible is a God of love, of mercy, the Father to us all—did he act according to your conceptions of right and wrong, of human kindness, love and truth? He made man, surrounded him by circumstances, the effect of which he foreknew, and was all-powerful to control. ‘I, the Lord, do all these things; I make peace and create evil.’ God could have kept man pure, holy, free from sin. My friend will not deny that. Man, a puny creature, on a little planet amongst innumerable planets in the universe, God could have kept him as he wished. But the Deity places man where man does that which he cannot help, and for doing that which he cannot help God punishes him. And having punished him, He re-peoples the earth, and allows a recurrence of precisely similar circumstances. If any of you had with foreknowledge built a house upon a sandy foundation, and it fell, would you blame yourselves or others for carelessness in your work? But when it had once failed, would you build of precisely the same materials, in precisely the same place, and on no better foundation? Would this be carelessness, ignorance, or what? Yet you tell me that God, the all-wise, all-powerful, made exactly the same state of things,

producing, as everyone would see, the same result. You tell me that he made man susceptible of evil, that he made evil which caused him to fall, that he punished him for that which he could not help. You tell me that he again placed man in precisely the same circumstances, to bring upon him eternal punishment for that which he could not by any possibility avoid. Is this wise? Surely this was never revealed by God. Surely I am doing wrong when I tell you that the God of the Bible is not the God which you or I would fashion in our own minds. They do not represent him as a poet would picture him, a being grand, great, noble, and supremely good, that every one must revere, despite himself. But they picture him not only so that the Infidel may carp and cavil, but so that even the most ignorant man at the town pump may tell you he thinks better than his God thought. Do you tell me that was revealed by God in an ignorant age, and to an ignorant people? I tell you, you blaspheme. If he be God, and if he revealed his will to men, he should have revealed it in such words and in such power that the mightiest intellect would have confessed its truth. Will you tell me that my friend's brain will go higher than the Deity? You would blaspheme if you did, and if I did, I should be denounced for my scoffing. But what have you here? We have a mighty edifice erected, we see it fall, we deplore it; we look upon it after the loss of human life, and we find exactly the same things happening again, which God, in his infinite wisdom, could have prevented, if he had chosen. If God had foreknowledge at the time of creation, he must have known that man would become bad, and it is simple nonsense and sheer absurdity that it grieved him at his heart, because he must have been equally affected (if affected at all) at the time of the creation; if, on the other hand, it is meant that God made man good, knowing and intending that he should afterwards become bad, and subsequently grieved and repented that he had made man with such an accompanying condition, then is the statement equally absurd, for it would thus picture the omniscient and unerring God as committing an error, resulting in grievous infelicity to himself. Could any blasphemy be more outrageous than the words of the text, or could any Infidel be more effective in attacking the character of the Bible God than the orthodox commentators, who endeavour thus foolishly to account for an evident inconsistency in the text?

The main feature in God's determination to destroy man must have been to effectually remove evil from the face of the earth, and thus remove the cause of his own grief; and it would, therefore, be expected that if the world was re-peopled at all, that the new inhabitants would be so differently constituted as to prevent their being liable to the action of similar circumstances to those which had impelled their predecessors in an evil direction. Was this so? No. The book states that God, having declared that all flesh was corrupt, these of the old stock of mankind having personal acquaintance with all the pre-existing evil, corruption, wickedness, and violence, and having the selfsame nature and passions as their fellow-men. Without any rectification or attempt at change, which would improve their thoughts, words, or actions, Noah and his family were preserved specially to re-people the world, and the result was, as common sense would have anticipated, that with a recurrence of similar circumstances and conditions, similar results did necessarily follow; and, accordingly, as the population extended, corruption, violence, idolatry, sensuality, the crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah, murder and rapine, all prevailed, and man became shortly after as wicked as he was before the flood. But it may be said, you are only dealing with one little portion of the book, you are taking that which seems to stand out in striking relief, and trying to make a case out of it. You condemn this punishment, but you don't understand that God is a God of love, of mercy, of kindness, and of truth; he neither grieves nor repents as man; and though it says there that he grieves and repents, yet if you would see it in a different light, not seeking to cavil, but in a spirit of faith, you would make something else of it. You tell me to read this book with the spirit of humanity, faith, and prayer; and I daresay I shall be told, before this discussion is at an end, that if I had done this I should not have attached to these texts the meanings I have. But I tell you that the best spirit in which to grapple with any question is a desire to understand it, and an intention to get to the the bottom of it. (Hear! hear!) The only way to get at truth is to search, to rend the veil that is thrown across the temple, despite all consequences. The desire to keep men ignorant only exists in those who want to keep their feet upon the necks of the people. There never can be any harm in man obtaining knowledge. Knowledge is the lever by which man may raise himself, despite all the creeds in

the world. Knowledge is a sword which has cut through many creeds, and is cutting through many more. This God of the Bible, a God of love! It seems to me that he is not so, for I cannot imagine that any deity, being a god of love, would at any time order one nation to declare war against another. And yet we find this Deity, when guiding his chosen people to the promised land, declares war against a particular nation: 'I will have war with them from generation to generation.' What! the Deity, the Omnipotent, the All-powerful war with man! Why, by his will alone, he could destroy all. The Creator declaring war against those whom he had not yet created! Surely this is unjust. I, such as I am, did not choose where I should be born, what language I should speak, in what clime I should live. I chose none of these, and yet here I am, and perhaps against me, before ever I breathed, a decree of war was promulgated by this God of love and mercy. Did the poor Amalekite choose that he should be one? Why war against him? Is this just? Is it loving?"

The above contains the whole armour of Mr Bradlaugh's war against Christianity, and it was met by the Rev. Brewin Grant, in a manner which satisfied the critical theologians who had induced him to enter into the conflict. It is not my intention to quote Mr Grant's reply, as my object is to lay before my readers the strongest arguments with which Mr Bradlaugh started, and with which he has since continued his anti-Christian warfare. It is by this means I seek to establish the fact, that the Infidelity of Mr Bradlaugh has never been the logical scholarship of scientific inquirers who have opposed Christianity upon the *a priori* ground of its want of harmony with critical exegesis, but upon the basis of popular ignorance. In his second speech "Iconoclast" said:—

"So far from the God of the Bible being a God of truth, he

has contradicted himself, for he says that he appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but in his name of Jehovah was he not known to them? Now, I say he was known unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the name of Jehovah, and he himself has contradicted himself. God a God of truth! Why, God promised to Abraham, in the most solemn words he repeated his promise; nay, this book, which reveals the attributes of Almighty God, tells us that that God condescended to swear to a weak, puny man that he would establish his kingdom for ever, and that his seed should be as numerous as the sand upon the sea shore. That promise was reiterated and sworn by God; and I ask, Where is that kingdom now? Where? Don't tell me that it is meant figuratively; don't tell me that it is not literal. God swore that it should be for ever: he established it, and now it is a thing of the past. You tell me that the God of the Bible always speaks the truth, and that he revealed himself in this book. I ask you to explain me this—'Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake, saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, and the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou also shalt prevail. Go forth, and do even so. Now therefore, behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee' (2 Chron. xviii. 18-22). My friend may say that the account of the prophet was not a correct one; and the Lord certainly appears to have been very unfortunate in most of his prophets. He himself says of some of them that lies came out of their mouths like water; and of others, that they were as cunning as foxes to deceive. This is very unfortunate, because we never know when really to rely upon a priest and when not. We never know what will really happen from what God's mouth-pieces say, because he himself has given us such a very bad character of them, and it behoves us to use great caution in relation to them. But supposing that for once the prophet did not tell a falsehood; that the priest in this instance really did speak

the truth. The all-wise Deity is represented as sitting in council, seeking strategical suggestions from inferior spirits, inciting them to devise and offer plans for his approval or rejection; and ultimately the God of truth is represented as receiving and approving a scheme based on falsehood and treachery. Those who should be pure and without guile, the heavenly host, uncorrupted by contact with frail humanity, or gross earthly conditions, the angels of the Lord—these prompted by the Deity, who is the fountain of all truth and purity, plan amongst themselves the most plausible form of falsehood, to induce Ahab to proceed to the place where his enemies should destroy him. In this case as in the preceding, if the account is received as literal truth, the effect is to deprive the Deity of his noblest attributes. God, however, we are told, is a God of justice, and no respecter of persons, though he loved Jacob and hated Esau, Esau having the misfortune to be an honest man, while Jacob was a cowardly knave. I daresay most of you know the story of Jacob and Esau, but I will briefly relate it. They were the sons of a patriarch named Isaac. Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents, but Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. One day Esau came home from hunting, fatigued, hungered, and ready to die. At the point of death, he asked his brother for food, and that good kind brother, whom God loved, seeing his brother exhausted and ready to drop, says, ‘Sell me your birthright for food.’ Esau, sooner than die, did give up his birthright to his brother, and God ratified a contract which deprived Esau of his portion of the promised land. At the death of their father, Jacob robbed Esau of his blessing, and again God confirmed the robbery, sending him forth to live by the sword. Again, Jacob, after a life of cunning and trickery in a distant part, returns to his own land, and finds his brother in power with the sword in his hand. He sends to propitiate Esau. His parents are returned, and Esau falls upon his neck, blesses him, and forgives the fraud, cunning, and trickery of his early life. Yet God says, ‘Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.’ Again, God excluded Abraham’s first-born son Ishmael from the promised land because he was a slave. It is not I who quarrel with the justice of the Deity, and speak in disrespectful terms of him; it is not I who would be blasphemous; I but give you the words of the book itself. . . . I have to do with this evening. Is God a God of justice? Did Ishmael choose that he should be born of

a bondwoman? Oh that I possessed the power to make each one of you feel the high esteem in which I hold the word liberty! that I possessed a tongue of fire that should light in each a flame that should never be quenched! I hold that it is diabolical for man to be a slave, and yet I find this man Ishmael born a slave, and shut out of the promised land because he was a slave. Did Ishmael choose that he should be a slave, and yet, though the first-born of his father, he is to be shut out from the land of promise for a cause over which he had no control. Slavery, that curse of humanity, I find again and again in your Bible. I am told in it that you may purchase a man for a number of years, bones, blood and brain; that you may work him, aye, that you may beat him so cruelly that he will die; but if he live three days, you escape the consequences of having murdered him, because he is your money. What, the power of gold recognised in the kingdom of God! What, man allowed to take his fellow man, with the same reason, the same brains, the same intelligence as himself,—perhaps not so logical, indeed,—and to beat him within three days of his life, because he is his money. It is even so. Gold is the god men worship; its power is recognised everywhere, even in the kingdom of God. Again, if a man marry while he is your slave, his wife and children shall be your slaves also, and if he goes out he shall leave them with you. For you know slaves do not love their wives; love with them is an accident; they have not, like you and I, common human feeling. At least God does not think they have, for he states that if this slave shall love his wife and children, and refuse to leave his master, then his master shall take him to the door-post, bore his ear with an awl, and he shall be a slave for ever. (Shame) ‘Oh, but this was meant for the Jews.’ The more unfortunate, then, for them. They were the chosen people of God. But if for the Jews, why not for all? If you tell me that any particular part of this book does not apply to me, I ask, in return, which part does? If you say one chapter does not apply to me, then I challenge your right to apply a single sentence to me. If the whole is not a revelation from God to man, then I deny the whole; and if it be a revelation, then I say that the God of the Bible is unjust in allowing and sanctioning slavery. Man’s desire is to be free. No man is a man unless he desires to be free. One main reason of my being here to speak to you to-night is to make you be free physically and mentally, and that

knowing your rights, you may have the power to take them, despite of any one. I may be a poor logician, but with my little learning I have got thus far with my logic to know that born into the world how I may be, I am as noble as any other man so long as my course of conduct is honest and true. I believe that the true source of happiness is to make other men happy and wise, and no system can make man happy or wise which even connives at men being slaves. Connected with this slavery, there is, I blush to tell you, a horrid, terrible, degrading inhumanity, which I should shudder to read in an assembly like this. My friend may tell me that this was ordained for an ignorant people and an ignorant age. I tell him, if it is revealed by God, that it is for all humanity, otherwise it is no revelation at all. I will challenge slavery wherever I find it. I will combat it whenever it comes in my way. Slavery of the mind is an evil, as well as slavery of the body, and I am here to combat the slavery of a creed. I believe that a book which contains any such procept as that a man's wife and children may be taken from him, is a bad, bad book. Even in our own time we see men speaking our own Saxon language, with white skins like ourselves, and standing erect as I do, supporting the bondage of their fellow-creatures, and preaching in their churches from this very Bible that men may be slaves. What, I ask, is this: Did these men choose where they should be born? Is it not a terrible punishment, whatever the crime of their forefathers? Shall I say more? Shall I tell you that throughout this book I find constant evidences of God's injustice? I may not be logical, but I am one who thinks that man is responsible to society for his own crimes alone. This book, however, tells me that the people shall suffer for the crime of their king. This, I say, is unjust. I am told that your God is a God of mercy, love, and truth, and yet the Bible says that the very worst man of whom we have any record, was a man after God's own heart. I am told that the man, who in early life rebelled against his king, collected around him the vagabonds, the discontented, and those who were in debt, who fled to a foreign country, and murdered the inhabitants of the country who had sheltered him; who robbed right and left; and when he came to the throne himself, was so bad that his family exhibited the most disgusting immorality; who could not have been a good father, or he would not have had such bad children ('Oh, oh')—

who was a very bad citizen ; who, when the Philistines prepared for war, assembled an army to help to murder his own brethren in blood and country ; yet he was a man after God's own heart ! The man who caused people to be murdered in the most barbarous manner without offence ; who robbed a chosen soldier of his best treasure in his absence, and then coolly plotted his murder. This David it is whose crime God revenges upon his unfortunate subjects who had committed no offence. From his earliest birth David was a wicked man, and through his whole life was thoroughly bad ; he robbed, murdered and lied, without compunction ; when on his deathbed he begged his son to bring two more men down to the grave in blood ; and yet he, of all others, is declared to be the man after God's own heart ; it is the Bible which also says that he was perfect in his ways, and never broke any of God's ordinances. No doubt, my friend's keener logic will show that I am inextricably involved in dealing with this ; no doubt he will prove that slavery does not mean slavery, but something else ; no doubt he will prove that it is spiritual death, and not literal ; that if I had read this prayerfully and in faith, I should have made something different of it. But I challenge him to deal with these texts as they are. Let me have them expounded, and don't tell me how poor I am, how weak I am—(laughter)—but view these facts staring you in the face from your own book—revealed, as you tell me, by God. And when talking of a low class of punsters, believe me, I would never make a pun in relation to Deity, when I was speaking solemnly, and throw ridicule even on your monster Deity, whom I cannot revere. And if I am to speak of a Deity independent of this book, I should consider it a shame and disgrace to me, much more if I believed, were I to descend to punning. The book is before us ; let us have the courage to open it, to read it honestly, and not fear what men say, or what consequences may follow. Pardon me, if in anything I may have offended. Pardon me, if to some I may seem to have used language which does not apply to the Deity. It is in the book. I have but used it as it is. Let my friend show me that my words are not true upon it. (Cheers)."

I refrain from quoting further. This has been the style of Mr Bradlaugh's attacks on the Bible from that hour to the present. He has known no change. Whatever

is the subject announced for his anti-Christian lectures, the woes of the Amalekites, or the immoralities of the Patriarchs, form the bulk of the discourse. He has never felt himself strong in opposing the Gospels, which appeal to the innate morality underlying the religion of all peoples, as *this* attack does not afford the same sensational *exposé* which is to be gathered from the records of the Jews under a state of civilisation] different from our own. The Sheffield Debate is only important, so far as it shows the foundation upon which Mr Bradlaugh has raised the superstructure of his opposition to the Christian Religion. On the part of the clergy this encounter was a blunder. It gave a commission to Mr Bradlaugh to cruise against orthodoxy with credentials which could not afterwards be impugned. Before it happened, it would have been impossible for the Infidels to have raised an audience of 300 persons in any provincial town. When it was over, "Iconoclast" found that he had importance imparted to him, and he authorised his friends to challenge the clergy in every town he entered. The clergy greedily took the bait. They attended his meetings to protect their flocks. They brought their congregations with them to witness the Infidel overthrow; they paid the money necessary to keep the agitation on foot, and when the ambitious cleric got defeated, either by impudence or logic, they rallied to controversy with the hope of achieving success by fresh disputants, but only to create doubts in the minds of those who would never have taken the trouble to listen to

the shallow Heresiarch, if their pastors had had more logic and less ambition. However, there can be no doubt but the Sheffield Debate was the fortunate impetus which impelled the audacious lawyer's clerk, through Atheistic controversy, to a seat in the House of Commons. And this Sheffield Debate-type of Mr Bradlaugh's unaltered controversial manner—what is it? As will be seen, I have inserted "*sic*" till I got tired. It is an impudent compound of bad grammar and shallow reasoning. Why the Rev. Brewin Grant, or any other self-respecting person, condescended to appear in public against a debater of such vulgar proclivities and mean attainments is not easy to conjecture. The objections raised against Holy Writ are simply the objections of uneducated impertinence and irreverence all the world over. I have furnished, it will be admitted, an ordinary specimen of pot-house discussion, a specimen of what "Saladin" has bitterly called "the oratory of the 'Cat-and-Ladle.'" Mr Bradlaugh formed his manner as early as Mr Spurgeon did; and like that luminary, he has never developed. By energy, bluster, and bull-dog pertinacity, he has contrived to induce a certain uninstructed section of the community to let him have their hard-earned coppers, he ever making it appear that he was and is very, very poor. In the eyes of all cultured and thoughtful people, he has strengthened the Christian position rather than weakened it.

CHAPTER VI.

“Iconoclast’s” Debate with Rev. Brewin Grant at Sheffield—How Brewin Grant conducted Himself—“Iconoclast” on Jewish Slavery—Brewin Grant’s Explanations—Description of Debate by One who was Present—Quarrels as to Publication of Debates, and as to Cash derived from Sale of Tickets of Admission.

THE Sheffield Debate with the Rev. Brewin Grant was a feat of theological polemics which stamped success upon “Iconoclast’s” name. Mr Grant’s reputation had been won on hundreds of platforms, to which he had challenged all comers, and he took as great a delight in holding discussions as do the most audacious members of a Mutual Admiration Society. He was a laughing, clerical philosopher who objected to all the satirical smartness being monopolised by the Freethinkers. Many persons were of opinion, that unless a man’s theology was pretty fairly fixed, more doubts would enter his mind after listening to an intellectual tussle with this renowned controversialist, than were banished by his clever explanations of difficult problems in Scripture. Mr Grant knew that several Secularists made their points by saying smart things, even if they were irreverent; and in order to undermine their popularity, and to turn an audience against their peri-

patetic philosophers, he considered it a sacred duty to turn the laugh against his opponents, even at the cost of the merriment being detrimental to the tenets of the Sacred Records. Repeating the same lecture in a fresh town every day, it was only reasonable that proficiency should be attained in explaining scriptural texts.

One of "Iconoclast's" strongest objections to the Inspiration of the Old Testament was as to its sanctioning slavery, which created great amusement in a mixed audience. It caused, however, a comical revulsion to find that, after a laboured Infidel argument had been illustrated by "Iconoclast's" graphic descriptions of how a domestic slave was treated by the Jews, the Christian advocate retorted that the boring of the slave's ear to the doorpost by the master was a proper punishment for his cowardice in preferring to be a slave rather than a free man. In like manner, when the Secularist described the consequences of the rash vow of Jephthah in dooming his daughter to be a sacrifice to the Almighty, there was a sense of moral satisfaction when the exponent of the new Theology quietly asserted that the sacrifice did not mean the taking away of the life of Jephthah, but it meant her being devoted to a life of religious celibacy. The smartness of Mr Grant's repartees ensured him a sympathetic audience, while the liveliness of the encounter procured attention to both combatants. A friend of Mr Bradlaugh's, who was present at this debate, gives the following description of the first encounter between these athletes:—

"I travelled one hundred miles to see Mr Grant tackled by a Cockney. Both parties were well matched. Mr Dodworth, a noted Secularist, backed 'Icon.' against all comers. But the Sheffield people were sadly at issue about the name. It was pronounced in a dozen different ways, the most popular being 'Ikon-nuckles' and 'Ikonoblast.' I looked round the platform to see Isaac Ironsides, who for many a long year had been the leader of the Freethinking Socialists at Sheffield. He was nowhere to be seen, for he had transferred his worship to the shrine of David Urquhart, and had left Freethought to devote his attention to the 'Foreign Affairs' agitation, and to doubts as to whether or not Lord Palmerston was a Russian spy. I missed many other good men and true who had gone wrong in religion or politics, particularly those who were slightly cracked in respect to some theory of Science or Philosophy. There was a loud cheer of welcome when 'Iconoclast' commenced his speech. He had the audience entirely with him from the first, and he managed to keep it. The Christian advocate was something so different from all other specimens of ecclesiastical debaters, that he appeared to represent a new school of thought, which had severed itself from all the orthodox traditions of theology. 'Iconoclast' was on his good behaviour. He used up old lectures for his opening speech. He argued with force, but continually fell into invective in denouncing the Laws of Moses and the narratives of the Pentateuch. Mr Grant in every case set himself the task of knocking down the foundation of his argument, without entering into a defence on the grounds on which it was attacked. 'Iconoclast' lunged at an opponent who weakened his armour by raillery, and the audience was kept in a roar of laughter by the skilful feints with which Mr Grant disarmed his antagonist. There was a crowded hall, and an audience which any speaker might feel honoured in addressing. The three years' mission in which Mr Grant had been engaged had made him *au fait* with every illustration which was used by Infidel advocates, and although the answers which were given did not satisfy me, as I do not think they satisfied the Christians, yet they were convincing for the moment. The debate made the reputation of 'Iconoclast,' and his first provincial laurels were gained at this Sheffield encounter."

This contest was the commencement of a life-long rivalry, which in the course of years became decidedly

unpleasant. Mr Grant possessed a facility for drawing blood from his antagonist, while he flourished with his boxing gloves, and for every blow he landed he retired to his corner with a chuckle, which was very galling to the Infidel champion. "Iconoclast" could never shake hands with his foe after an encounter. He betrayed in his manner a feeling of irritation, which he was unable to conceal. The contest was no sooner ended at Sheffield, than a series of challenges were given and received for other debates, which it took years and years to bring off. A debate took place with Mr Grant at Bradford. This was followed by frequent scratch encounters at the close of lectures. Ultimately, and after much provocation, a debate at Cowper Street, and another at South Place, in London, were carried through. Sometimes these Grant-Iconoclast debates were not completed. At other times they were not published. Disagreeable squabbles took place between the disputants as to the accuracy of the reports, or the prosaic charge of not accounting for tickets of admission; so the records on either side do not yield attractive reading. Mr Bradlaugh, now that he has achieved nearly the summit of his ambition, may not care to revive those recollections. Those who now know the great Tribune of *Demos* may not be aware how he has been worried by controversialists, and that he has not always been able to shake off his antagonists. No clearer exposition of his labours can be seen than in an extract from the preface of a published discussion, held at Hartlepool, between the

Rev. Brewin Grant and a Mr Symes. The language gives unmistakable internal proof that the Rev. Brewin Grant was the writer, and it refers to Mr Bradlaugh in his capacity of challenger, and the manner in which the defence had been taken up. After referring *en passant* to the "Three Years' Mission" to the Infidels to which Mr Grant was selected on the suggestion of the Rev. John Angell James and the Rev. Dr Campbell as the most suitable minister in the Congregationalist body to debate with the Secularists, he proceeded to describe his contests with Mr G. J. Holyoake, Mr Charles Southwell, and Mr Robert Cooper. He then deals with Mr Bradlaugh.

Anyone who wades through the preface referred to, will observe that the Rev. Brewin Grant stuck to his antagonist with the tenacity of a bull-dog, and that he insinuates and proves that "Iconoclast" stooped to the unworthy dodgings of a Jeremy Diddler, and to the mendacity of an Ananias. It could be no pleasant task to stand before an audience to debate either the verities of the Christian Religion or the superiority of Secularism as set forth by Mr Bradlaugh. When it came to a question of issuing a writ for libel, it was evident that Mr Bradlaugh was unable to control his temper. Perhaps the forensic experience of the Infidel Leader had overbalanced his judgment, and he fancied he should obtain an easy victory. If so, he was woefully mistaken.

CHAPTER VII.

Hardships encountered in his Early Propaganda—Travelling without Sufficient Funds—Making Headway in Lancashire—Lectures in Wigan—Riot, Windows smashed, Hall doors burst open, “Iconoclast” spat upon, etc.—Landlady of Hotel insists upon His leaving the House—The Mayor threatens to stop His Lectures “by Force of Law”—Debates—Riots on Subsequent Occasion.

FEW advocates of unpopular opinion have had more difficulties to surmount than Mr Bradlaugh experienced during the first fifteen years of his Atheistic agitation. However successfully a man may pilot himself through situations of public peril which entail constant poverty, the mind at last grows weary of being a follower of Sisyphus.

We invariably find that in the religious world those evangelists who start life brimful of enthusiasm and seek “reputation at the cannon’s mouth” of out-door meetings, or their equivalent, in collecting audiences at theatres and music halls, or any other bizarre place, generally settle down into quiet ministerial office as soon as they have pushed themselves prominently before the public. Few men resemble Mr Spurgeon, who, notwithstanding the time he has been before the public, by his excessive vitality, continues to attract the unthinking sinners and convert them into ultra-pious

Christians. Mr Bradlaugh had more serious opposition to encounter than most modern preachers. His record shows that, amongst the class in which he personally moves, he has won friends who still adhere to him, although he is an autocrat amongst the representatives of advanced opinions. Possibly there is no man living in Great Britain who has fought a harder fight for a position, or has been placed in more painful situations than Mr Bradlaugh was when he carried on an agitation without backers or the sanction of a live organisation, such as supports the ordinary propaganda of public societies. The Secular Society, of which Mr Bradlaugh is the ornamental President, is now, and always has been, a mere name. Every Infidel lecturer who has ever conducted a campaign in this country has fought like Hal' o' th' Wynd for his own hand. The primal obstacle with all Freethought advocates is the means with which to support life while attempting to disseminate unpopular opinions. There has always existed in every community persons who were Dissenters from the dominant creed; and Christians, who have precedents in the sacred records of an unbelieving Thomas and a persecuting Paul, should make some allowance for the historic continuity of itinerating zealots as they find them in their own illustrious ancestry. Had the Freethinking a party share of the wealth of the churches at their disposal, so that they could support a Bradlaugh in every town, it is very probable that the distinction between a *real* and a

nominal Christian would soon exhibit unequivocal signs of an absence of uniformity in the religious thought of our country. Fortunately for the popular creed, enthusiastic Secularists are few in number, and they are soon satisfied. Those who make up their minds to renounce Christianity generally do so without making any fuss over it, and after a short time they fall into the ranks of the Indifferentists; and, perhaps, with a view to escape publicity, they do not trouble to put themselves in evidence in small towns, while in large cities they will not attend any regular organised meeting. On this account the mere destructive anti-Christian cannot form a permanent society, like any of the churches, although his followers may be in an absolute majority over the church-going public. Secularists seldom see the necessity of providing subscriptions to enable an anti-Christian agitation to be carried on. During the earlier years of his Secularist career in London, "Iconoclast" would earn probably not ten shillings per week as a result of his lectures. When he addressed meetings at the "Hall of Science," after he had obtained a reputation, the remuneration would not have amounted to more than the salary he earned when acting as a solicitor's clerk. When, about 1857, he commenced to lecture in the provinces, he was at first ignored. Soon, however, he was feared as a slashing debater, and became renowned, but his fame did not as yet bring him any substantial benefit. The field was clear to him. Every other Infidel lecturer had been driven off the platform by poverty. Paying

audiences could not be got. The announcement of a Freethought lecture only attracted a scattered congregation, composed of all the local "cranks," who came to exhibit their folly at the inevitable "discussion" which followed the lecture. No person with a position to lose would dare attend, for such person would be gibbeted in the locality as an "Infidel." His most pronounced supporters were, as a rule, too poor to entertain the lecturer. His nominal "fee" would be grudged when paid, and very probably there would be a running fire of comment as to "how much he got for his lecture." Sensitive men soon grew tired of this sort of thing. It was a common case for a lecture to inflict a three-months' insolvency on the poor enthusiasts who sought to enlighten their neighbours by bringing a London lecturer into their midst. Mr Bradlaugh was the first who altered this system. He required no fee, for the sufficient reason none could be given him. He generally asked his friends to provide the hall and advertisements. If there were a surplus he took it for his labour. If the lecture were a financial failure, he had to go unpaid. Frequently these arrangements brought him to the verge of extreme difficulty in finding his railway fare to take him to the next town, where he was advertised to address a meeting. He narrates a very laughable but sad adventure of this kind, after an address he delivered in Edinburgh, which makes manifest the straits he fell into by travelling long distances with insufficient funds. In his brief autobiography, he says:—

“For the encouragement of young propagandists, I may here insert a little anecdote of my early lecturing experience. I had lectured in Edinburgh in mid-winter; the audience was small; the profits microscopical. I, after paying my bill at the Temperance Hotel, where I then stayed, had only a few shillings more than my Parliamentary fare to Bolton, where I was next to lecture. I was out of bed at five on a freezing morning, and could have no breakfast, as the people were not up. I carried my luggage (a big tin box corded round, which then held books and clothes, and a small black bag), for I could not spare any of my scanty cash for a conveyance or porter. The train from Edinburgh being delayed by a severe snowstorm, the corresponding Parliamentary had left Carlisle long before our arrival. In order to reach Bolton in time for my lecture, I had to book by a quick train, starting in about three-quarters of an hour, but could only book to Preston, as the increased fare took all my money, except 4½d. With this small sum I could get no refreshment in the station, but in a little shop in the street outside I got a mug of hot tea and a little hot meat pie. From Preston I got with great difficulty on to Bolton, handing my black bag to the station-master there, as security for my fare from Preston, until the morning. I arrived in Bolton about quarter to eight; the lecture commenced at eight, and I, having barely time to run to my lodgings, and wash and change, went on to the platform cold and hungry. I shall never forget that lecture; it was in an old Unitarian Chapel. We had no gas; the building seemed full of a foggy mist, and was imperfectly lit with candles. Everything appeared cold, cheerless, and gloomy. The most amusing feature was that an opponent, endowed with extra piety and forbearance, chose that evening to specially attack me for the money-making and easy life I was leading. Peace to that opponent’s memory, I have never seen him since.”

About this time he commenced to work up the hard-headed Lancashire Radicals, with whom he made himself a general favourite by his suave manners, and a certain nameless grace, by which he always secured the attention and respect of women. In Manchester, he gradually made a position for himself from lecturing under a small

railway arch, to addressing a mass-meeting in the Free Trade Hall. In the more intelligent districts round Manchester, he was always sure of a large audience. The neighbourhood of Rochdale is famed for being the most intelligent district in the northern counties, and the great majority of the Rochdale pioneers—the fathers of the Co-operative Movement in England—were liberals in politics and theology. Not far from Rochdale is Hollingworth Lake, a large reservoir, which supplies several towns and villages with water, and the banks of which are as favourite a place for outdoor Secular demonstrations as is Shipley Glen in Yorkshire. There “Iconoclast” frequently met his followers from all parts of Lancashire, and the meetings were in every sense popular. But a very different state of things was met with in the Lancashire coal field, where a set of human savages, calling themselves staunch Christians, took delight in maltreating public speakers. They had been tampered with by a wild Irishman of the name of Murphy, who was employed by a Controversial Society to attack the Roman Catholics from the point of view of an Ulster Orangeman. Irishmen were there hounded into a chronic state of religious insanity, and every new speaker was looked upon as an emissary from those ecclesiastical firebrands, and was opposed with splinters of stone and pieces of coal, while the police were often called in to separate the opposing factions, who maimed each other for the glory of the Church. There were

but few adherents of Freethought in Wigan, so "Iconoclast" determined to become the Apostle Martyr of his Creed. There had been no Infidel lecture for twenty years previously in the town of Wigan, so it may easily be imagined how great was the excitement when an announcement was made by placards that "Iconoclast" would deliver two lectures on "What has the Bible done for England's sons and daughters?" On the first night there was a full attendance of hostile critics. The second night there was a riot. Hundreds who could not gain entrance were engaged in attempting to destroy the building. The windows were all smashed. When "Iconoclast" appeared he was hissed and hooted by the packed meeting; and disagreeable to relate, the organisers of so disgusting an affair were clergymen of the Church of England, who had become so demoralised by the Romish Controversy that they determined to try a fresh method of breaking the skulls of their opponents. The door was closed. A frightful knocking was heard, and it was found that a local clergyman, at the head of a number of Christian roughs, was insisting on admittance. Mr Bradlaugh informed him that the hall was full. Still the dogged clergyman insisted upon entering, and his brutal followers, who were no less anxious to gain admittance for the purpose of kicking up a row, and using obscene language, pushed behind. It required the Herculean strength of "Iconoclast" to close the door in the face of the surging mob. While all this was going on, the apertures

for admission of air were burst open, and boys and men forced their way through panes of broken glass, while others climbed on the roof to throw lime and water through the ventilators. At last a man pushed his arm through an opening on the top of the building, and began to wave one of the bills which announced the meeting. An hysterical person suddenly sprang upon the platform, and pointing to the intruder, shouted, "Si' the lad! t' owd devil has coom for Iconokles." This caused a scene of unparalleled confusion. The meeting broke up in disorder. Religious persons, in their excitement, abused the lecturer with violent epithets. They actually spat in his face, struck at him from behind, and when he got outside the hall, the fiendish crowd, stimulated by the parsons and the *unco guid*, yelled at him till they became blue in the face.

Fearful of losing his life, "Iconoclast" decided that he would not return to his hotel, but leave by the first train for Liverpool. He made his way to the station, and there discovered that his money had been left in his valise at the hotel. Without being murdered by the way, he managed to return to the hotel. No sooner had the landlady seen him, than she insisted on his leaving the house at once. She professed to be afraid that the hotel would be pulled down by the rioters if Mr Bradlaugh remained. "Iconoclast," who kept his mental equilibrium in defiance of rioters and landladies then determined to insist on his rights as a guest at the hotel, and quietly walked up to his room, and went to

bed. The mayor of the town, "a respectable, red-faced, dumpy sort of shop-keeping person, and who" (says Mr Bradlaugh), "as I am creditably informed, used threats about stopping my lectures by force of law," was advised to "Try and do it." This was not a pleasant experience, but "Iconoclast" resolved that he would visit Wigan again and again till he succeeded in creating friends to assist him, and till he conquered and cowed the spirit of his enemies. Ultimately he did succeed in compelling respect to be paid to him. He also induced a layman and a minister of the district to enter into a public debate. One, a Rev. Mr Woodman Woodville, a Swedenborgian, obtained some local distinction in controversy, but a victory by "Iconoclast" over a semi-heretic was not considered of great weight by the public. With Mr Hutchings an instructive discussion was entered into, and "Iconoclast" slowly made some headway in the dense brains of the Wigan colliers. The mayor appeared to be a pompous fool, who threatened his municipal thunders, and flinched when the time to act arrived. On his second visit Mr John Watts accompanied Mr Bradlaugh. When he was leaving the meeting he was assailed by the lurking scoundrels who had been demoralised by the evangelist, Murphy, and they followed with yells, trying to get the chance of a "running punse" (kick) at him. "Iconoclast" then made a proposal which they respected. He turned right about face, and told the brutal mob to pick out two of their best men and he would fight them on the

spot. Nobody cared to come within the reach of his formidable biceps. He proceeded in peace to the house of his friend. The following night the rioters grew bolder. They menaced the gentleman and his wife who had given the hospitality of their house to "Iconoclast." They used the redundant stock of paving stones in hurling them at the heads of the Secularists. Some threatened to murder "Iconoclast;" while others swore that they would drive him out of the town, as they had banished the lecturer, Murphy. They packed a mob on each side of the hall, so as to secure the object on which they determined to bestow their superfluous Christian charity. On leaving the hall by the back entrance, some fifty determined scoundrels, for the honour of the local clergy, followed him and administered at least one violent kick on the leg. The kick was inflicted in a dark passage, where it was impossible to keep guard. Bricks were hurled at him, and injured some of his companions.

The result of his Wigan meeting was the establishment of a society of Secularists, and Mr Bradlaugh's pluck gained him the respect of those who sought to make him a modern martyr after the manner of St Stephen.

CHAPTER VIII.

To the Rescue of Mr Bendall, who was prosecuted for distributing Free-thought Pamphlets—Letters to M. le Procureur and the Clergy of Guernsey—"Iconoclast" and Bendall Placarding the Town—Free Admission to the Lectures—Riot, Stone-throwing, etc.—Disturbances on the occasion of the Second Lecture—The Authorities challenged, etc.

THE rioting at Wigan was part of an epidemic which spread over every part of the kingdom where aggressive Secularism made its appearance. It even invaded the ancient patrimony of the Dukes of Normandy. A Mr Bendall had become so far anxious to proselytise his neighbours in Guernsey, to the knowledge of the advanced creed of theological negation, that he laid in a stock of iconoclastic pamphlets, and freely distributed them throughout the island. The authorities made short work of the local zealot, by a prosecution under the ancient laws of Blasphemy, and as the worthy jurors decided that the pamphlets were contrary to what they considered law, they inflicted a fine of £20, in default of the offender refusing to promise not to continue the distribution, to be followed by imprisonment in the absence of finding securities that he would not repeat the offence. This was on the 10th January 1861. Mr Bendall uttered his shriek according to the required formula of *Haco*, which in this case

was equivalent to the cry of old: "Come over unto Macedonia and help us." A cry which "Iconoclast" responded to.

When Mr Bradlaugh's coming was announced, the island assembled all its bigots to welcome him with a royal salute of rotten eggs and as many putrid cab-bages as could be wielded at close quarters. He had previously sent a collection of tracts for distribution, accompanied with a hand-bill, of which the following is a copy:—

"To M. le Procureur, to the Clergy (especially of the Method-istic New Connection), and to the public of Guernsey:

"Gentlemen, I shall lecture in the Assembly Rooms on February 27th and 28th, when I shall endeavour to prove that the Bible is not a revelation from an all-perfect Deity. I am especially induced to visit you, because I have heard, with feelings of deep regret, that you, M. le Procureur, and you, gentlemen of the clergy, have permitted to-day the revival of an institution belonging to an ignorant past, and have evoked a law to defend a religion which, if from God, should need no such paltry aid, but should stand impregnable, because true.

"You who were parties, active or acquiescing, in the late prosecution of Mr Stephen Bendall, I challenge you to defend your faith in a free and fair discussion. You have no resource; you have entered the lists with the weak weapons of prosecution, and I invite you to retrieve your honour, if you dare, by selecting your means of defence from a more potent armoury—that of honest manly thought."

This pronunciamento was intended to awaken the instincts of platform controversy amongst the clergy, and to act as a challenge to the authorities to prosecute one who was ostentatiously willing to submit himself to the action of the law officers of the Procureur who well knew that any hostile decision of the jurats would be

appealed against, and carried to the Superior Courts by Mr Bradlaugh. The authorities took a more direct method of protecting the orthodoxy of Guernsey. They induced the owners of the Assembly Hall to break their contract with those who hired it. This was, for years, a favourite dodge of those who opposed Freethought lecturers. There happened to be another place which was vacant and it was engaged. The next difficulty was to secure the ordinary means to announce a public meeting. The printers refused to print the placards. The crier or the bellman was connected with the Methodist chapel, and *his* conscience would not permit him to dispose of his services in disseminating amongst the inhabitants the announcement of "Iconoclast's" lectures.

Anticipating those obstacles, "Iconoclast" had brought placards ready printed from London. But even the bill-poster was orthodox. *His* conscience was proof against employment which might endanger his soul. "Iconoclast" thought it was a pity that the walls of such a theological paradise should remain undecorated with his posters; so, with the assistance of his local Sancho Panza, he sallied forth to fight the Guernsey windmill, armed with a ladder for a sword, while the shield was represented in the shape of a bucket of paste. The two heroes guided by the moon's struggling rays, covered every vacant space with the invitation to "Iconoclast" lectures; so that the natives could clearly see that the gauntlet was thrown as a fair

challenge to M. le Procureur and his ministers to prosecute the challenge, or to meet him in debate. In this way the wrongs of Mr Bradlaugh were to be revenged, and the banner of Freethought raised from the mire of a paltry prosecution. It was easier to challenge than to persuade anyone to pick up the gauntlet. But "Iconoclast" was of different mettle to Lord John Russell, who was depicted in *Punch* as the naughty boy who chalked up "No Popery" on the wall, and then ran away. "Iconoclast" stood his ground. His predecessor in heterodoxy in Guernsey was the Cardinal who had stood the fire of the naughty boy, little Johnnie Russell. *He* had not contented his mind with parcelling out England into Roman Catholic dioceses, but had extended his efforts to Guernsey, and had there been received by the shout of Haco and the royal salute of rotten eggs.

But Cardinal Wiseman was encumbered with his priestly robes, and did not know how to fight the Guernsey bigots. "Iconoclast" was of a different mettle. A hostile manifesto appeared on the walls, evidently by some zealot whose orthography was not equal to his orthodoxy, but whose meaning was sufficiently distinct in his invocation of: "Down with the Infidels, away with the Infidels." The clergy warned their flocks not to go near the meeting. Their instinct of curiosity strove sadly with their desire to preserve their faith from all risk of contamination. They left their Bibles at home, but they brought a supply of ammunition to pelt the

lecturer as he approached the place of meeting. They crowded the street where the hall was situated, but they would not enter the precincts lest a spell of blasphemy might enthrall them, and lest they might be unable to cleanse themselves from the abomination which would render them unfit to be members of a Christian church. Their physical wants were attended to, if their religious instincts were left ungratified. They were supplied with liquor to keep their courage up to the standard of the effluvial ammunition they held in readiness to hurl at the lecturer. They talked vaguely of throwing "Iconoclast" and Mr Bendall into the sea. At last their volleys were exhausted; but when Damon and Pythias had mounted their platform, they perceived nothing but a beggarly array of empty benches; and as no person was willing to act as a money-taker at the door, it became a necessity to throw open the meeting, free. This proved an irresistible attraction. The crowds who had amused themselves by yelling in the streets, now took advantage of the free admittance.

The lecturer commenced his address, and was listened to with tolerable patience for a time until his voice, Stentorian as it was, was drowned by the rioting of those who blocked up the street outside the hall doors. The doors were kicked by the surging mob; the shutters were torn down; windows were smashed; and from the shrieks heard from outside, it was impossible to proceed with the lecture. The lecturer then

begged the audience to remain quiet while he went outside to appeal to the mob's love of fair-play. Some who were present seemed ashamed of their townsmen, and implored of Mr Bradlaugh to proceed with his remarks, as it might be dangerous to show himself outside. Regardless of their advice, "Iconoclast" insisted upon confronting the foe. He found that the mob was being incited to violence by a number of religious people, headed by persons connected with various places of worship, who, too cowardly to act personally, were distributing coppers to fishermen and lads to break the doors and shutters of the hall. As soon as he appeared, stones were thrown at him. One narrowly missed his head. A shout of jubilant execration greeted the failure. The mob dare not face the big heretic, and the sight of his prize-fighter jowls alone quelled the spirit of murder which ruled the bigots who thirsted for his blood. He returned to finish his lecture, and found that he had half-conquered his audience by the prize-ring bounce he had displayed, which never fails in favourably impressing the vulgar. The next day his opponents were better organised. They lined the streets, mostly drunk. They waited outside his hotel for the purpose of insulting him, but there were no signs of any interference by the agents of M. le Procureur.

At the second meeting he had a fair audience, who listened with respect to a lecture on the New Testament. The friends of the clergy did their utmost to

cause confusion by annoying those who went into the hall. When they found that persons, who had come to create a disturbance, remained to listen in quietness, a determined effort was made to break up the meeting. There was a large plate-glass door at the entrance of the hall which had been closed at the commencement of the lecture. An ugly rush of drunkards burst open this door, and the noise caused by the shivered glass alarmed the timid who tried to listen to the address. The mob was composed of porters, and the usual hangers-on of a sea-port town, and who at that season were out of employment. They stormed the platform, expecting that by their numbers and audacity they would succeed in breaking up the meeting. "Iconoclast" told his audience to keep their seats. He went up to the individual who was creating the greatest disturbance, seized him, and ejected him by brute force.

The authorities, of course, declined to take up the challenge of a legal prosecution which Mr Bradlaugh formally gave, and which he well knew would never be accepted, by distributing, personally, to every person who chose to accept a copy, the pamphlet for which Mr Bendall had been prosecuted. They took their revenge another way. They persuaded the officers of the garrison to grant leave of absence to the soldiers, who were sent to assist the rioters. It was their safest policy. Had the clergy entered the lists as antagonists, it would have imperiled the faith of their flocks; for in every town

where discussion had taken place, it had led to a vast increase of persons who commenced the study of biblical subjects, and who lost faith in the churches, even if they did not join the Secularists. It is calculated that, for every single *open* pervert from Christianity, there are at least twenty who having lost their Christian belief, have sunk into the great abyss of Indifferentism.

The conclusion of this brief campaign was marked by the same mock-dangers which had inaugurated it. The crowds which followed "Iconoclast" to the Hotel de l'Europe endeavoured to assault him. They made a rush at the hotel. Possibly they thought that they would be appeased by a free distribution of liquor as they endeavoured to burst into his room; but his hostess had by this time taken him in charge and had locked him up in a room, where she kept him safely till the crowd had dispersed, when he was liberated by his fair custodian. His enemies, however, kept watch and ward over the hotel until the steamer sailed. They escorted him to the landing stage, shouting, "Pitch the Infidel into the sea," but no one made the attempt. It is by the part he has played in such escapades as the one I have just referred to, that Mr Bradlaugh has become the darling of a certain rough element of the community. Those who respect law and order and decency can have only one opinion about the valour of assaulting a poor police-officer in the execution of his duty, as Mr Bradlaugh did at Devonport.¹ But there are those who deem

¹ *Vide* next chapter.

it heroic to stand in bullying antagonism to law and order. Of such is Mr Bradlaugh's following, and we make him welcome to their coppers and their applause. He too, at length, with the sweets of office within his reach, is beginning to be ashamed of the huzzahs of the rowdies of Infidelity and Sedition, but he is not yet ashamed of soliciting their coppers, as the begging column of his journal abundantly testifies. A mere simulacrum of valour passes for heroic courage with the undiscerning multitude; and Mr Bradlaugh's knowledge of legal quirks and technicalities places him in an exceptionally advantageous position for producing the simulacrum. He well knew that M. le Procureur would not dare to convict, as the cause would at once be removed to a higher court, and, if need be, to a higher and a higher, incurring endless expense and worry; but Mr Bradlaugh's simple-minded dupes did not see all this, and so his Bobadil valour in daring the authorities of Guernsey, was looked upon as the valour of a Bayard. Over and over again thus has Mr Bradlaugh made it appear to his benighted admirers that he was extremely brave, when he has, in reality, been only supremely cunning.

CHAPTER IX.

Lectures in Plymouth and Devonport—Prohibited by Superintendent of Police from Lecturing in the Park—A Field is engaged—Arrested, released, returns to Lecture, re-arrested—Before the Magistrates—Acquittal—Again in Devonport—The Authorities baffled—Action against the Superintendent—Result, etc.

“ICONOCLAST,” bent on opening new ground, next tried the West of England. He had lectured at Plymouth, and was requested to address a meeting in the park at Devonport, which was then used by the various sects for proselytising those who did not care to attend either church, chapel, or synagogue. While Devonport is distinct from Plymouth, the distinction is a merely technical, and not a geographical one. For all practical purposes Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport form one district, but being garrison towns, the municipalities are restricted by the Commandant of the Forces, and the various local authorities may be taken to be under a quasi-military control.

At the time of which I write, the Christian Young Men’s Association took the lead in the out-door evangelising operations in the Devonport park; and the friends of “Iconoclast” determined to join in the wordy warfare, by which such associations manage to keep themselves before the public. As soon as it was publicly notified that “Iconoclast” intended to speak at

this place, the theologians collapsed. Their meetings were announced as discontinued till he left the town. On his return, Mr Bradlaugh was requested to deliver an address at this spot. When he commenced to speak, he was met by the superintendent of police, who officially told him that all public speaking was prohibited in the park, and that he would not be permitted to address the people. "Iconoclast" did not venture to dispute the order of the policeman. Shortly afterwards a Mr Steer, who represented the Secular Society, entered into an agreement with the owner of a field near the park for the use of his ground, for the purpose of "Iconoclast's" giving an address. Placards appeared announcing the programme, and the superintendent of police ostentatiously undertook to protect the Christian religion from all attacks by the foe. Whether he was ordered by his watch committee to take this step, or whether he did it of his own accord, is unknown. He waited on the owner of the field, and did his best to persuade him to break his contract. He failed. He then endeavoured to intimidate Mr Steer, the Secularist, but with him he succeeded no better than with the owner of the field. He then determined to act as his own censor and stop the lecture. "Iconoclast," not anticipating that such a stretch of wanton authority would have been exercised by a policeman, rose to commence his address. He had spoken but one sentence: "Friends I am about to address you on the Bible," when this Jack-in-office advanced to arrest

him. It was useless to show the superintendent that the field had been hired under a written agreement, which defined the terms of hire, and that he held a receipt for the licence to use it. This busybody, wishing to acquire local renown, ordered six of his constables to arrest Mr Bradlaugh. They executed their duty in the usual style. Determined to secure their prey, two of them gripped each arm, while the fifth and sixth seized hold of the coat collar. Surrounded in this style, their prisoner was marched to jail. On the way he became obstreperous, and exercised a little muscular energy in the ribs of one of the constables, which proved of salutary effect. The constable might have considered himself fortunate in that he was not severely hurt for his officiousness, as "Iconoclast" had no lack of brute strength. They released their prisoner as soon as they got him away from the field. "Iconoclast" at once returned to his post. He was then re-arrested along with Mr Steer, and conveyed to the prison, where Sir Oracle refused to admit him and his fellow-prisoner to bail. The next day the prisoners were brought before seven magistrates, who appeared predetermined to convict. The superintendent was represented by two solicitors, but they experienced a difficulty in framing a charge upon which to proceed. Ultimately they alleged the offence to be "exciting to a breach of the peace, and assaulting a constable in the execution of his duty." This charge was, however, not sustained; but for all that

the hearing lasted two days, and "Iconoclast" would certainly have been convicted if he had not been able to obtain the evidence of some Nonconformist witnesses to testify to the facts, as objection was taken to all the witnesses who were Secularists, on account of their disbelief in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Mr Bradlaugh conducted his defence in a style of forensic cross-examination which elicited the attention of the public press. He broke the case down, and the magistrates were compelled to dismiss the charge. The defendant then demanded, and obtained, a certificate of dismissal, with the intention of carrying the case into another court, to recover damages for malicious prosecution. Before leaving the court he told the magistrates (some of whom had treated him with marked discourtesy) that he would deliver the lecture in the town despite the Acts past, or to come, of the Local Authorities. On leaving the court he received a triumphant cheer, and he found that his bold defence had won him troops of friends even amongst those who considered his religious opinions unsound and pernicious.

To carry out his designs, "Iconoclast" carefully studied the boundaries of the boroughs of Plymouth and Devonport, with the limits of the authority wielded by the commandant of the military forces. He was gratified to find that while the three towns were closely united by governing boards, which interlaced one another, they were divided by the river Tamar,

which, with all the water to the sea, was under jurisdiction of Saltash—distant some miles. Armed with this knowledge, an announcement was made by placard in the following words:—

“In consequence of advice received, “Iconoclast” will deliver an open-air address on Sunday afternoon, and will be present near the Devonport Park Lodge, about half-past ten, in order to vindicate the right of free speech.”

This notice left it to be inferred that “Iconoclast” was going to speak in or near the Park, and public curiosity was widely excited as to the probable result of a second police conflict. They naturally thought that if the meeting did not take place in the Park, it would be held in an adjacent field in its immediate vicinity. The superintendent, with the firmness of his tribe, determined to make preparations by which to succeed better than in his late attempt. He drafted out twenty-eight of his picked constabulary. He instilled into the mind of the mayor that there were ominous signs of a riot. The mayor applied to the commandant to hold a body of soldiers in readiness to act on the spot, should the police be insufficient to suppress the disorder, which the superintendent was doing his best to create. His worship abandoned his visit to church with all the pomp of beadle and mace, in order to be present at the commencement of “Iconoclast’s” lecture, to read in person the Riot Act, and thereby win knighthood through his manly and

prompt decision. The public was present in considerable numbers. "Iconoclast" and his friends were at the trysting spot, despite a violent shower of rain, when, much to the astonishment of the assembled multitude, he led the way to Stonehouse Creek. When he arrived there he stepped into a small skiff and rowed down to a boat which was moored in deep water, but only three yards from the shore. A platform had been constructed aboard the boat for the lecturer. He was now outside the jurisdiction of the Devonport police, and within hearing of a magnificent assembly, who appeared delighted at the audacity of the speaker. "Iconoclast" launched at once into his subject, and within a few minutes the baffled superintendent, with his body of twenty-eight constables, forced an entrance into the front ranks of the crowd, only to be received with a burst of derisive cheers. The mayor, poor man, felt that he had been made a fool of, but that was only the penalty of his public function. When this body of policemen had gained the water's edge, "Iconoclast," with mock courtesy, invited the superintendent to attend his next course of lectures in the hall, where he would not be exposed to a heavy downfall of rain similar to that which was then pouring on their heads. He further told the superintendent and mayor, that he should avail himself of this method of publicity every time he came to the town, if he would not be permitted to speak in any other place.

This dodge produced an impression in "Iconoclast's"

favour, and the Christian Young Men's Association effected a close alliance with the police in order to annoy the Secularists. Not many weeks had elapsed before Mr Bradlaugh instituted an action against the superintendent. In due course it was set down for trial at Exeter. Contrary to Mr Bradlaugh's usual custom, he issued the writ through a solicitor (Mr Leverson), and instead of defending it himself, Mr Collier, Q.C. (afterwards Sir Robert Collier), was "briefed." The only motive for such a course was that of the attorney's costs. It was thought that there would be a verdict for the plaintiff, and the costs would amount to £100, or thereabouts; but Mr Collier, Q.C., temporised with his brief, and, gratuitously, apologised for his client. He obtained a verdict, but only a farthing damages. The Radical press commented strongly on the iniquity of the verdict, which placed the power of public meetings at the mercy of any policeman. "Iconoclast" did not hesitate a moment. He appealed to the Court sitting *in Banco* against the verdict, as being contrary to the weight of evidence. He alleged that he had sustained a loss of £7, 15s., which ought to have been taken into consideration as special damages. This would have entitled Mr Bradlaugh to very considerable costs; but Mr Baron Channel, in his discretion, had refused to give the usual certificate in actions of Tort. When Mr Bradlaugh appeared before the Appeal Court, he argued the case with persistency. Chief-Justice Earl, and the three puisne Judges of his court

who sat with him, listened with patience to Mr Bradlaugh's arguments, but they overruled all his points. Pecuniarily, Mr Bradlaugh suffered a great loss through this litigation, and for a long time it crippled him, as he had then a coadjutor on the *National Reformer* who objected on principle to make use of the columns of the journal for the purpose of obtaining public subscriptions to defray legal costs. If this coadjutor had remained on the journal, or if the memory of his scruples had been respected, Mr Bradlaugh's forensic career would have been shorn of all its glories. His interminable lawsuits have been carried on with the coppers wrung from the hard hands of poor working men, who have made his barren triumphs possible. He has shamefully used his journal as a sort of begging-hat, which he has carried round incessantly amongst miners and pitmen and others whose brains were as benighted as their hearts were kind. Poor dupes, to give their pence out of their scanty and hard-won earnings to a man ever crying out about his poverty; although, according to his own affidavit, he has thousands of pounds invested, and is in receipt of £1100 a year!

CHAPTER X.

Lectures in Dumfries—Excitement caused by His Visit—Secularists kicked by the Mob—His Life threatened—He hides by the River Side—Is escorted by Friends to His Hotel—Lectures in Burnley—Incredible Conduct of the Wesleyans—Meeting monopolised—Fight between Wesleyans and Secularists—Lectures in Huddersfield—Hall Doors broken with a Crowbar—Imprisoned—Liberated—Before the Magistrate—Solicitor defeated—Fresh Tactics adopted by His Enemies.

IT is a long cry from Devonport and the memory of Blake to Dumfries, and the classic land of Burns. "Iconoclast," attracted by the great freethinking Scotchmen, determined to waken up the descendants of those deacons who were satirically immortalised in "Holy Willie's Prayer." A Scotch Secularist is the most argumentative logician who exists on the habitable globe. When he once breaks loose from his hereditary caution, he fears neither the bailie nor the minister nor the promised hell of the Bible. There were a few such in Dumfries, who wished to welcome "Iconoclast" to a new sphere of labour. Arrangements had been made for the lecture to take place in a decent hall. It was expected that an orderly audience would be assembled ready to meet the lecturer in that intellectual contest from which a true-born Scot was never known to flinch. "Iconoclast" had had little experience

of the dense, doctrinal Scotchman. He felt somewhat amused at the appearance of the streets of Dumfries towards the approach of evening. Those who had nothing to do, and all the day to do it in, were congregated at the street corners. Evidently they were on the look-out for the stranger, who had come to challenge the doctrines taught in their kirks. Suddenly a bell was rung, which caused the inhabitants to move *en masse* to the rear of "Iconoclast," whom they serenaded with all the yells which formed the accompaniment to the wild slogan which had called their forefathers to arms. They had arranged to improve the occasion by distributing religious tracts, of the usual inane description, to all who entered the door of the hall where the meeting was to take place. They blockaded the entrance to the hall to prevent Mr Bradlaugh gaining admittance; and, afterwards, when he passed through the crowd by main force at another place, they thought they would be able to storm the platform and sing a *Psawlm* over the vanquished Southron, whom they had done their best to keep outside the building.

The lecturer tried to speak, but the yells of his pious opponents drowned his voice, and every time he was compelled to stop speaking, the tract distributors offered their wares to the audience, who were supposed to be half-way to perdition by the very fact of their presence there. To preserve their reputation for orthodoxy, the militant Christians felt that it was necessary to

be either shying a weapon at the lecturer, or else inviting a doubtful parishioner to go down on his knees and offer a prayer to cleanse Dumfries from the pollution of an Infidel lecturer.

Like Dunsinane, the hall could laugh a siege to scorn. There were no side windows. The mischievous partisans outside could "shy" their stones at the lamps only in front of the hall doors, and as the quantity and strength of their whisky prevented a particularly sure aim, there was consequently a frightful waste of ammunition. They had "squared" the police, and it was evident the mob had considered they were temporarily taken on to the higher service of smashing heads instead of using arguments. They would neither allow the lecturer to speak, nor would they keep silent; and this continued till close on midnight, when "Iconoclast" felt that it was time to return to his hotel. Many of the Secularists who went out of the hall were kicked in a most malicious manner, while the violence of the mob against "Iconoclast" went to the extent of threatening his life. He was practically a prisoner in the meeting called to listen to his lecture. At last, a kind friend taking pity on his position, told "Iconoclast" to follow him through an underground passage, which would procure him an exit where there were no persons on the watch to stone him. He had never been in Dumfries before, and thinking it too hazardous to walk in the gas-lighted streets, he wandered down to the river side, where,

under the shade of "the Dock trees," he could himself, unperceived, watch the knots of people who were loudly vociferating that, if they caught him, he would not leave Dumfries alive. Whether it was the piety or the whisky that gave birth to those murderous threats, it was impossible to discover; but it must have been a disagreeable sensation to know that the clergy who had hounded those zealots to a state of dangerous madness, had not the manliness to restrain a fury which might not have stopped at murder, and which had given tacit licence to the police to wink at atrocities they might not dare to publicly justify. Long after the midnight bell had tolled, "Iconoclast" kept in the shade of that river whose ripple is music to the ear of every Scotchman who thinks of his national poet. "Iconoclast" at last heard the murmurs of the mob grow fainter and fainter, so he started in search of his hotel. His friends had scattered themselves throughout the town in quest of their lost lecturer, who, before long, had discovered some of the scouting parties, who piloted the way to his hotel, where he might expect to be temporarily in safety. The anti-Infidels gloried in their victory. They had prevented the lecture being heard. They had protected their faith from the assaults of "Iconoclast," and they were under the influence of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of John Barleycorn, happy.

Since that eventful night a great reaction has taken place. Freethought journals are widely read in the

land of Burns, and there should be no part of Scotland more impregnated with modern thought than is the neighbourhood of the ancient town of Dumfries, which has given birth to two of the most distinguished Philosophic, Moralistic, Literary, and Freethought luminaries of the age—Thomas Carlyle and William Stewart Ross. On his return South, it was arranged that “Iconoclast” should address a meeting at Burnley, when the friends who sympathised with his views in East Lancashire might be able to meet with those who had long worked with the advocates of advanced thought in the Todmorden district, whose trysting place for many years had been on the slopes of Blackstone Edge, on the wild backbone of England, renowned as the rallying spot for Lancashire and Yorkshire in the days when Ernest Jones led the fierce Northern Democracy, and Fergus O’Connor had marshalled his “Old Guard,” when political reform seemed a distant dream. Burnley was by no means a reactionary town. It contained many men who were equally as outspoken as was “Iconoclast”—men and women who had read the *Reasoner* during the long struggle of Mr Holyoake to propagate Freethought opinions. Dr Uttley had kept alive a spirit of opposition to creeds of all kinds; and Joseph Barker’s congregations of Christian Brethren, which had followed him for a quarter of a century in all his religious gyrations, from Wesleyanism through Unitarianism to Atheism, and which ultimately retrograded with him round his circle; numbered many hundreds. Joseph Barker had then just

returned from Nebraska, and it was arranged that this theological turncoat should join as co-editor with "Iconoclast." This arrangement brought about a feeling of stormy antagonism amongst the Wesleyans to the course of lectures announced by Mr Bradlaugh. The opposition, however, was not directed so much against him as "old Joe Barker." It was organised and directed by the New Connection Wesleyans, who were alarmed at the prospect of Joe Barker's settling down in Burnley. They organised a riot. They issued placards telling the people of Burnley that the inhabitants of Dumfries had stoned the lecturer, and they invited their townsmen to follow so good an example. They met in the schoolrooms of their chapels, where they prepared themselves to both fight and preach against Infidel meetings. They did not succeed in keeping their *modus operandi* secret. In the factories, the male spinners and the power-loom (female) weavers determined that they would attend "Iconoclast's" lecture; and that, if they found him to be "a gradely chap," they would use their clogs in obtaining for him fair-play and order. There was no hesitation amongst the Secularists. They attended the meetings; listened to the lecture, and paid attention to the champion of the Methodists (a Mr Riley), who, instead of discussing the subject of debate commenced to preach, monopolised the meeting; refused to conform to the statutory ten minutes' discussion; defied the chairman; insulted the Secularists, and announced his determination to do precisely what he

liked. Mr Riley's behaviour did not suit "Iconoclast's" notions of what ought to be the etiquette of a public debate; and as no one else could enforce order, he quietly took him by the shoulder and made him sit down. The hall was packed by the Wesleyans. They showed the liveliness of their faith by the sprightliness with which they sprang upon the platform, and they gave evidence of their manliness when, by the mere weight of numbers, "Iconoclast," together with several of his friends, was thrown upon the floor, where, lying in a heap, the prostrate Secularists were in considerable danger of suffocation. The East Lancashire Secularists now thrust their way through the Wesleyans. For a few minutes the fight waxed furious. The Wesleyans fought with carnal weapons, and at one time fifty saints and as many sinners were kicking furiously, and hurling maledictions at each other. At last the police forced an entrance. The offenders who had commenced the fray slunk out of the hall and attacked their enemies, who were standing near the hall entrance. The battle was short and decisive. The Wesleyans never again attempted to take the field against the Secularists. The succeeding lectures of "Iconoclast" were listened to in peace. Soon a shabby Secularist hall was established, sufficiently large to accommodate the two branches of Freethinkers, and Burnley was the town where the first division took place between those who held to the doctrine enunciated by Dr Drysdale in the celebrated "Elements of Social Science"—the future

New Testament of iconoclastic Atheism, in which prostitution is put forth as one of the social necessities of youth; and that other section which repudiates the cancer of a malignant materialism.

One of those episodes which frequently occurred took place at Huddersfield, where "Iconoclast" was a great favourite. His friends had hired the Philosophical Hall for three lectures, which had been well announced, and a large congregation had assembled at the hour fixed for commencing the first lecture. When the lecturer arrived at the hall, he found the door was closed. Influence had been used by his opponents to cause a breach of agreement with the proprietor of the hall. Large numbers of Freethinkers were present from all the districts round about Huddersfield. They had travelled from Holmfirth and Honley. Men were there who had carried in triumph the huge black flag of Paddock which had flaunted in many a struggle when Richard Oastler was the Steward of Fixby Hall and the chosen leader of the Ten-hours' agitation. There were men present who had borne the brunt of every fight at the old Hall of Science; and who, like George Brook, had been dismissed from Starkie's factories a generation before; or who, like Joseph Thornton, had trained up a squadron of Reformers, or who, like W. Rowland Croft, had kept alive the flickering flame of Secularism till George Jacob Holyoake delivered the first lecture in Huddersfield fifteen years after the death of the

Socialist agitation. It was not likely that these men would stand tamely by and see "Iconoclast" locked out of a hall which had been paid for in advance for its hire. The police stood near, while, with willing arms, a crowbar was obtained, which was successfully wielded in effecting an entrance. Then the police interfered, by arresting "Iconoclast." They lodged him in prison. Bail was sent for, but before a magistrate had arrived, who would have answered for his appearance, Mr Bradlaugh was liberated, on his promise to attend before the magistrate. A Mr Learoyd, a solicitor, who was at once a Methodist, an attorney, and a Conservative, was employed to vindicate the prejudices of the Christian opponents. His law was even worse than his logic. He was defeated with derision. At an interval of many years, after he had figured in the *rôle* of lay controversialist and would-be advocate, he aspired to parliamentary honours at Boston. Unfortunately for his clients, he robbed them to pay his election bills, so he was compelled to flee to a land where extradition treaties are unknown.

There were many other riotous assemblies in which "Iconoclast" took a leading part, but those which I have enumerated are a fair sample of the opposition which his peculiar mode of advocacy induced amongst his opponents. They were of a brutal nature, but it can hardly be said they exceeded the rowdyisms of the ultra-Protestant Orangeman and his hereditary enemy, the Roman Catholic. Perhaps it may be a necessity of

this class of brutal proselytism that heads should be broken before rational argument can enter the understanding. If so, it is a disagreeable means of advancing opinion, and it is found only amongst a class whose theological and anti-theological consciences are of a particularly inflammable nature. I shall not quote any further examples of this class of meeting, for very soon after those occurrences the tactics of "Iconoclast's" opponents were changed into a war of "Breaches of Contract," where halls were let for lectures, and where the owners took a pleasure in breaking their engagements; and when brought before the County Court, they justified their acts by preventing Infidels from giving evidence on oath. Any stick is good enough to strike a mad dog with, as the proverb hath it. A propagandism, the advocacy of which consisted of little argument to convince the mind, and much insult to outrage the feelings, was hardly entitled to demand a respectful hearing. Ever since Mr Bradlaugh has begun to be "respectable," his lectures have been almost exclusively on political subjects; and even the few Freethought lectures he now delivers, are completely shorn of their olden fire and "go" and bitterness. Even Mr Bradlaugh can try to be "respectable," when he thinks it will *pay*.

CHAPTER XI.

How Favour was obtained with the English Democracy—Arrest of Dr Simon Bernard—Italian Revolutionists—Felici Orsini and Bernard—The Orsini Bombs—Meeting of Conspirators in Paris—Discharge of Bombs—Escape of Emperor—Orsini arrested, imprisoned—Visited by Emperor during his Incarceration—Guillotined—Lord Palmerston anxious to curtail Right of Refugees in England—Activity of Bradlaugh at this Crisis—Protected by Mounted Police—Old Bailey surrounded by Republican Enthusiasts during Bernard's Imprisonment—Warders bribed by the "Defence Committee"—Bradlaugh supplies Jurymen on the Bernard Trial with a Quantity of Sandwiches—Truelove Prosecution—Bradlaugh's Political Work during 1858-9.

THE real hold which Mr Bradlaugh obtained on the London Democracy was achieved by his impudent proceedings in connection with the defence of Dr Simon Bernard, who, at the instigation of the French Government, was arrested in London upon a charge of having been connected in the proceedings instituted by the Italian Revolutionists for the destruction of Napoleon the Third. His trial, at the Central Criminal Court, was an epoch in modern history, as it revealed the political shams by which we are always surrounded; and, in this case, it showed how we were betrayed by great names in which the public place unbounded confidence. For what Charles Bradlaugh did on this occasion he deserves the thanks of all Revolutionists and Assassins.

There have been many attempts in history to get rid of tyrants by violent means, sometimes successfully, while at other times failure has been so pronounced as to throw back the tide of democracy for generations. For three centuries universal opprobrium has covered the authors and victims of the Gunpowder Plot in our own country. In France, the fate of Fieschi sank deep into the Gallic conscience, but a considerable discount may be safely taken off the horror of this class of crime, when we remember that the stigma is fixed in the public mind by those who are most interested in creating such a sentiment. In recent years, the fate which threatened only the two Napoleons was consummated in the assassination of the Czar.

For many years the French held Rome, until at last there was a settled conviction amongst Italians, that deliverance could come only from France. The Emperor was to be menaced by his fears of a violent death, because it was known that he really had a friendly feeling towards Italy. He had himself been an Italian conspirator. He held the traditional Napoleonic idea of wishing to be the titular King of Rome, a title which for centuries was an appanage of the German Emperors, and which had been renewed by his uncle in favour of his unhappy son. On these grounds, Felice Orsini determined to strike a blow at the French Emperor, if for no other purpose than that of warning him that his life and his throne would never be secure so long as his troops occupied the Imperial City. With

this view, he associated himself with Dr Simon Bernard and other representatives of the extreme Republican party. Their plans were to create a demonstration, perhaps not necessarily assassination, although they regarded it as an act of irregular warfare, where, like any other struggle, it is impossible to eliminate innocent sufferers. To quote a French proverb, "*On ne saurait faire une omelette sans-scasser des œufs.*" The instruments of destruction have become known in history as the Orsini Bombs. They were manufactured in Birmingham by a Mr Taylor, who, at the trial of Dr Simon Bernard, gave evidence as to their composition. When the plot was ripe, the band of conspirators met in Paris, and selected the occasion of the Emperor's visit to the theatre as the opportunity for carrying out their designs. The bombs were discharged. The object at which they were aimed escaped with his life, but many innocent lives were sacrificed. Felice Orsini declined to escape. He was arrested, tried, condemned, and guillotined. His justification was that Napoleon had betrayed his country, and that French soldiers prevented Italian liberty being won. Before he was put to death on the scaffold, he addressed a letter to the Emperor, warning him of his fate should he continue to oppress Italy. The Emperor took the warning, and secretly visited his victim in the prison of La Roquette. Whatever was the nature of the conversation which took place and the disclosures made at that interview, they will remain for ever unknown; but the effects were as-

tounding in their magnitude, for they led to an entire change of policy, which ultimately brought about the Franco-Sardinian Alliance which drove the Austrians out of Italy, and it subsequently effected the withdrawal of the French Army from Rome. But the terror created by the Orsini attempt roused the military feeling in France. Inflammatory pamphlets were published against England. The French refugees retorted against the "man of December" in most unmeasured language. When it was known that the bombs were manufactured in England, and paid for with money subscribed by certain prominent Englishmen, the cry of "*Perfide Albion!*" was raised, and a deputation of French colonels waited upon and implored the Emperor to declare war against England, as the "Asylum of Assassins." Public feeling was aroused to an alarming extent, and the known sympathy of Lord Palmerston with Louis Napoleon was evoked by the efforts to curtail the right of political refugees in England. This culminated in the arrest of Dr Simon Bernard, upon a charge of conspiracy to murder, and the attempt to pass a Bill in Parliament to amend the law of Conspiracy, so as to make the foreign exiles who had taken refuge in Great Britain amenable here for acts done abroad. Charles Bradlaugh became prominent at this crisis. Immense public meetings were held simultaneously in the metropolis. At those meetings, "Iconoclast" seemed ubiquitous. Committees were got up to secure funds for the defence of the accused. The Jewish

solicitor, with whom he was afterwards associated (Montague Levenson), like all his tribe, put himself in evidence everywhere, with an eye to business. The London Radicals entered heartily into the question, and it was asserted that our right of free asylum was in danger, French spies were spread over London. "Iconoclast" was subjected to every annoyance except domiciliary visitation from the police. Mounted police followed him to his home from public meetings. He was "shadowed" by French and English detectives wherever he went. On one occasion, while in a coffee-house with his friends, a French spy silently entered, and seated himself in the next compartment, where he pretended to fall asleep, in order the better to carry out his business. "Iconoclast," lit a match, as if to ignite his cigar, and he then placed it under this person's nose, which act soon caused him to open his eyes and ignominiously withdraw to his confederates outside.

Between the preliminary inquiry before the magistrates and the trial at the Central Criminal Court, there was a popular impression that Lord Palmerston's Government intended to surrender Dr Simon Bernard and his fellow-prisoners over to the French police. To prevent such a violation of our laws, which could not have been justified by any extradition treaty then in force, "Iconoclast" assisted at the organisation of a cordon of watchers, who surrounded the Old Bailey during the time of Bernard's incarceration, from committal to trial, with an intent to prevent by riotous force,

if necessary, such a truckling to the French Government. The warders had been bribed, and they gave daily information of what passed in the prison to members of the Defence Committee. The defence of Dr Simon Bernard was placed in the hands of Mr Edwin James, Q.C., who procured an easy verdict of acquittal. Few events of the present century have so roused public opinion as this celebrated trial and the demonstrations it evoked. There was much anxiety as to who would be empanelled on the jury, and as one jurymen who was likely to be called was known to be a friend, "Iconoclast" conceived the idea of supplying him with sandwiches sufficient to hold out a considerable time, should his endurance be called upon. The case terminated successfully, without too much thanks having to be bestowed upon either attorney or counsel. Mr Leverson, the chief solicitor, had subsequently to abscond, to escape being arrested for fraud, while Mr Edwin James, Q.C., M.P., who stood next on the list for Solicitor-General or a Judgeship, had the option of leaving England within twenty-four hours, or to remain and be charged upon an indictment.

Concurrently with the trial of Dr Simon Bernard, a violent attempt was made to crush "the liberty of the Press" by the prosecution of Mr Edward Truelove, for the publication of a pamphlet entitled "Is Tyrannicide Justifiable?" This suggestive *brochure* appeared at a critical time. Its publisher was a man who had the courage of his opinions. At that period he had

a second-hand bookshop on the west of Temple Bar. At Mr Truelove's shop congregated all extreme men who required a daring publisher. He was known as a man who would undertake to bring out any book which he thought ought to be issued from the Press, but which no other publisher, with the Law of Sedition, Libel, and Blasphemy before his eyes dare expose for sale.

When, on the public entrance into London of Napoleon and Eugenie, all the inhabitants of the metropolis vied with each other as to who should do the most honour to the French Emperor, Edward Truelove was the only man who ventured to display a hostile flag to the gaze of the City Magnates who waited to welcome our ally at Temple Bar. For a similar act Barbara Fritchie, in nailing the Stars and Stripes to her window, was immortalised by the American poet who celebrated the story of the march of Stonewall Jackson through Frederickstown. Mr E. Truelove published "Tyrannicide" and was arrested. Charles Bradlaugh, without hesitation, became Honorary Secretary to his Defence Committee. Mr Edwin James, Q.C., M.P., was retained for the defence, and practically entered into a compromise with the Government. In a letter recently published by the author of "Tyrannicide" respecting this prosecution against Mr Truelove, he states the following facts:—

"Edwin James, then a prominent member of the Bar, was engaged to defend the publication of the pamphlet on the ground

that a question on the liberty of the Press was involved. The prosecution was commenced under the Government of Lord Palmerston; it was compromised under the Government of Lord Derby. If the secret history of the prosecution should ever come to be written, it will probably be found that Edwin James had arranged with the Law Officers of the Crown to betray his client, in order to relieve the Government of Lord Derby of a difficulty which had been bequeathed to it by the Government of Lord Palmerston.

“At all events, there is no doubt that the compromise was forced upon Mr Truelove totally against his desire and intention. I shall not forget the trouble and emotion Mr Truelove exhibited when, late on the evening preceding the expected trial in 1858, he came to tell me how, as he had just been informed by Mr Leveson, the solicitor for the defence, when it was too late to instruct other counsel, Mr James had insisted that the defendant should withdraw the pamphlet, undertake to issue no more copies, and make a declaration that he had no intention of inciting to murder. But for the unwarrantable course thus pursued by Edwin James, the trial might have resulted in a new vindication of the rights of the Press. As it was, Edwin James, and not Edward Truelove, was responsible for the lame and impotent result.”

Throughout the whole of those proceedings “Iconoclast” did his best to sow dissension, at a period when the Government were disposed to be friendly with the Emperor Napoleon. In reference to Mr Bradlaugh’s political conduct during the years 1858-9, I prefer to say nothing. He was anxious to push himself into the front rank of extreme Radical agitation, and he accomplished his purpose. Success had not then developed the inordinate egotism which has since rendered him a revolutionary Autocrat. He kept up the acquaintance of French and Italian refugees, and he was acceptable to

them because he had a talent which enabled him to act as interpreter of their ideas. He was professedly a linguist. In those days, the European revolutionists were confined to Italy and France. There were no German Socialists till long after the advent of Prince Bismarck. The indignation of the working classes was not easily appeased when Lord John Russell took up the *rôle* of defender of British liberties against the principles of the Bill introduced by Lord Palmerston to amend the law of conspiracy, and, on account of public opinion, evoked "Old Pam," who was defeated with ignominy. "Iconoclast" swam with the rising tide, and sought the patronage of Joseph Mazzini, to give him countenance amongst those who valued this distinguished exile, including such men as Mr Stansfield, M.P., who left Lord Palmerston's Ministry on account of his connection with Mazzini. Impressed with ideas of Continental politicians, Mr Bradlaugh assisted in sending Dr Simon Bernard on a stumping campaign in the provinces. Later on, when he saw that Mazzini was falling in the background, and that the daring of Garibaldi was in the ascendant, he assisted in the organisation of the English legion for Garibaldi, and in such efforts he was constantly brought into contact with some of the staunchest of English politicians. That unlucky regiment was a much greater source of terror to the owners of Italian hen-roosts than to the soldiers of King Bomba. They were young enthusiasts, mostly Freethinkers, who had been taught to respect Garibaldi by Mr Holyoake years before the

name of the great Liberator was known to the generality of Englishmen.

Some of the most striking lectures of "Iconoclast" were those delivered during the years 1858-9, and they betrayed an amount of audacity which drew considerable attention to the young orator. He frequently spoke of Felice Orsini, whose memory was always held by him in respect. Within a few months after his death, when the guillotine had struck off one of the handsomest heads in Europe, it was seen that the Emperor had elected to change his Foreign policy. Mr Bradlaugh delivered a lecture with the sensational title, "The Ghost of Orsini Beckons Him On." No interference took place with this class of lectures so long as they were delivered east of the Mansion House, where no excitable Frenchmen reside, and where reporters cannot get their "flimsy" accepted by the daily press. Mr Bradlaugh, however, sought to procure larger audiences for his orations, and hired St Martin's Hall for a denunciation of "Louis Napoleon," which was intended to be given on an evening in March 1859. This alarmed the susceptibilities of the French Consulate. The Ambassador at that time was Count Walewski (the illegitimate son of the first Napoleon), who protested against such a meeting being held within a stone-throw of the French colonies of Soho and Leicester Square. The Home Secretary was instructed to prevent the lecture being delivered. St Martin's Hall was taken possession of by the police, under the orders of Sir Richard Mayne, and

ingress was denied to the public. This was a bold innovation on the rights of public meeting. It ought to have been resisted in the Courts of Law, and an appeal made for substantial damages. The proprietor had been indemnified by the authorities. He paid the expenses required by the hirers of the room. The acceptance of this amount, whatever it might have been, was an act of weakness, as it furnished a precedent which was acted upon in the various County Courts, when, soon afterwards, "Iconoclast" had to sue for damages, when he was locked out of the many halls he had engaged for the purpose of speaking upon unpopular subjects.

CHAPTER XII.

*Death of John Watts—Bradlaugh refuses to “square” Accounts—
Watts’ Widow Fund—The Quarrel with “Anthony Collins.”*

IN the summer of 1867, the health of Mr John Watts broke down. For some considerable time he had been editor and proprietor of the *National Reformer*.

Mr Bradlaugh was meanwhile carrying on the business of financial agent, in St Helen’s Place, ostensibly in connection with the Naples Oil and Colour Company, Limited. Mr John Watts enjoyed the respect of all sections of Freethinkers, and the love of many who personally knew him. His disease was that which destroys so many Englishmen—consumption. While he was dying at his residence in Shoe Lane (now a portion of the printing establishment of Messrs Spottiswoode), he was assiduously attended by many friends, who strove to make his passage into the domains “of the majority” as smooth as possible. Mrs Sexton, the wife of the (now) Rev. Dr Sexton, a nurse whom Miss Nightingale might have envied, looked after his material comforts. His house was besieged by visitors to see the sufferer, who, like Charles the Second, apologised for the trouble he

was causing, and the unconscionable long time he took in dying. Yet one thing weighed heavily on the mind of John Watts. There were liabilities which were unsatisfied in respect to his business, which he wished to get arranged with Mr Charles Bradlaugh before his death. He told the friends who stayed at his bedside that he could not get Mr Bradlaugh to speak upon business subjects. When Mr Bradlaugh called at Mr Watts' house, he kept a "hansom" waiting at the door, as an excuse for a very brief interview. For the benefit of the Secularist party, Mr Watts had suggested that Mr Bradlaugh should again edit the *National Reformer*. To this Mr Bradlaugh consented, but this was the extent of the concession he was able to elicit from his old associate, who resolutely refused to go through the business accounts. On one of the last visits which Mr Bradlaugh paid to Mr Watts, he deliberately refused to enter into any conversation upon the subject of business. This refusal produced such an effect on the moribund man, that after Mr Bradlaugh's departure he insisted upon getting out of bed and calling a cab, with the intention of going to Mr Bradlaugh's offices to have the matter cleared up before he died. The constant murmur on his lips was to the effect that Mr Bradlaugh was only awaiting his death to repudiate his indebtedness. He was lifted into bed. The next day he expired. All that was possible was done to show respect to his memory at a public funeral. Those who were present at that representative gathering will never for-

get what they witnessed before the coffin was removed from the house where he had died. The addresses over his grave at Kensal Green Cemetery were delivered by Messrs Charles Bradlaugh and Austin Holyoake. Before the body was removed from the house, a fund was proposed to be got up for the widow. Instant response was made to this proposal. Mr G. J. Holyoake, with his usual shrewdness, when giving his subscription, intimated to his immediate friends the advisability of the donations being handed direct to the widow, instead of to a committee. It would have been well if his example as well as his precept had been followed. About £300 was collected. But a very small tithe ever reached the widow of John Watts. When Mr John Maughan, a highly respectable Secularist, tried to ascertain what had become of the fund, he was informed that it had been used for satisfying some *supposed* liabilities of the deceased, instead of being handed over to Mrs Watts. In the following autumn, on the occasion of a Secularist excursion to Sevenoaks Park, the matter was broached by several speakers, amongst whom were Mrs Harriet Law, Mr Hearn, Mr Johnston, and Mr Maughan. This reference to the misappropriation of the £300 gave rise to a system of "Boycotting" those who dared to challenge the editorial clique who had obtained control of the *National Reformer*. The "Boycotting" was carried on to an incredible extent, in proportion as the *National Reformer* became the paid organ of Neo-Malthusianism. An amusing example of this took place when Mr Brad-

laugh had been proprietor of the journal about a year. It was seldom that open attacks were delivered against schismatic Secularists, but on one occasion the opportunity selected was that of a "reply" to an imaginary correspondent in the "Notices" on the "Leader" page. One of these veiled attacks was directed against "Anthony Collins." He treated it as a libel, and issued a writ against Mr Austin Holyoake as the publisher of the journal, ignoring Mr Bradlaugh as the editor. As Mr Austin Holyoake did not wish to be involved in litigation, he, through his solicitors, offered to apologise. Mr Holyoake's proposal did not meet with Mr Bradlaugh's approval. Mr Bradlaugh waited on the plaintiff, and accused him of cowardice in attacking the publisher instead of the writer, who, he contended, was morally, if not legally, responsible. He said to "Anthony Collins," in a tone which indicated that he was labouring under great excitement,—“You have taught me a lesson which I shall never forget. In future, no man shall be responsible for my opinions. You know that in my religion and politics I have always been ‘straight;’ but, from this day, I shall be my own publisher. If you insist upon an apology, you shall have it. But immediately after the apology appears, I shall attack you fifty times worse, and I shall repeat such attacks until either you or I are finished. If you choose to withdraw your demand for an apology, I will undertake that no more references shall be made to you in the *National Reformer*.”

This compromise was accepted. The next issue bore upon it the imprint that the *National Reformer* was published by Charles Bradlaugh, of Sunderland Villa, Northumberland Park, Tottenham, in the county of Middlesex.

This species of tyranny, Boycotting, bullying, and slandering has never ceased to be the principal weapon in Mr Bradlaugh's armoury. His "Correspondence" column still bristles with cowardly and masqued attacks upon all and sundry who stand in the way, or are supposed to stand in the way, of his vanity or his selfish aims. It was in the "Correspondence" he hinted that another prominent Freethinker embezzled in a Building Society. As a specimen of his Boycotting, it may be noted that he is proprietor of a shop in Fleet Street, from which he refuses to sell either the *Secular Review* or the *Freethinker* for fear of their rivaling his own journal, the *National Reformer*. And this is the man who pretends to be interested in and to have fought for the liberty of the Press!

CHAPTER XIII.

Visited by a French Countess—The Countess visited at the Grosvenor Hotel—Interviews with Prince Jérôme Bonaparte—Accompanied by the French Countess(?) on His Lecturing Tours—Why Prince Jérôme utilised Mr Bradlaugh—Arrested at Calais, etc.

IN the autobiographical advertisement issued under the pseudonym of Adolphe Headingley, a statement is made as to the intimate relations that existed between Prince Jérôme Bonaparte and Mr Bradlaugh. The statement is really amusing. The story reads as follows:—

“Bradlaugh was at work in his East End lodgings when, at the beginning of September 1870, he received a mysterious visit. On this point, Bradlaugh, with that general prudent reserve which distinguishes him when other persons are concerned, refuses to give any information but from the other side of the Channel; the ensuing details have been obtained.

“Surrounded with books, plunged in a maze of papers, sitting in his shirt sleeves, the better to resist the heat and accomplish his work, Bradlaugh’s silent labour was interrupted by an unexpected tap at the door.

“‘Who’s there?’ he exclaimed, in a tone of surprise.

“‘A woman, and a Frenchwoman,’ was the somewhat dramatic and unusual reply.

“Bradlaugh hastily donned a coat, and invited his visitor to take a chair, if, indeed, she could find one amid the litter and confusion of the room. Madame la Comtesse, having thus obtained admission, explained the object of her mission, with all the graceful eloquence which distinguishes a French lady; and, fixing her gaze steadily on Bradlaugh, she rose, and concluded by saying,—

“ ‘ You state that you love France, and I know that this is true. You are, it is said, a powerful speaker, and yet you hesitate to save a drowning people.’ ”

“ This mysterious visitor produced a wonderful effect on the course of Bradlaugh’s action. The war between the French and the German Empires had left him neutral. He could not sympathise with either party ; but when Napoleon fell, his thoughts began to turn towards France, and, stimulated by the entreaties of the patriotic Comtesse, he determined to act. It was the 17th of September when he began to agitate on this question. He at once organised a series of meetings in London and throughout the country, and in these the Positivists, especially Dr Congreve and Professor Beesley, took an active part.

“ These demonstrations—notably the great meetings in St James’ and St George’s Halls—did not fail to influence the Government. Mr Gladstone became thus aware of a great change in public opinion ; and on one occasion he even called on the lady who, by appealing to Bradlaugh, had originated the agitation. Madame la Comtesse was not, however, entrusted with any official mission, and had, therefore, no authority to answer Mr Gladstone’s questions. All she could do was to write to France. Thereupon the Government of the National Defence hastened to send two or three diplomatists over to England, who, however, committed so many egregious blunders that they soon destroyed all the good effect produced on the English Government by the popular demonstrations that Bradlaugh had, in a great measure, organised.

“ In October, the Republican Government at Tours spontaneously sent Bradlaugh a long and flattering letter, signed by Léon Gambetta, Adolphe Crémieux, Glais Bizoin, and Admiral Fourichon, declaring that they, as members of the ‘ Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale, réunis en délégation à Tours ; ’ ‘ tiennent à honneur de vous remercier chaleureusement du noble concours que vous apportez à la cause de la France.’ On the 2d of February 1871, M. Tissot, the Chargé d’Affaires of France in England, wrote to Bradlaugh :—

“ ‘ Quant à moi, mon cher ami, je ne puis que constater ici, comme je l’ai déjà fait, comme je le ferai en toute occasion, la dette que nous avons contractée envers vous. Vous nous avez donné votre temps, votre activité, votre éloquence, votre âme, la meilleure partie de vous même, en un mot ; la France que vous avez été seul à défendre ne l’oubliera jamais.’ ”

“Finally, in September 1871, M. Emmanuel Arago, member of the Provisional Government of the 4th of September, wrote on the back of the letter just mentioned the following words :—

“ ‘ En lisant cette lettre, j’éprouve très vivement le regret de n’avoir pu, enfermé dans Paris, joindre ma signature à celles de mes collègues de la délégation de Tours. M. Bradlaugh est et sera toujours dans la République notre concitoyen.’ ”

“During the agitation in favour of France, Bradlaugh on several occasions visited the Comtesse, who was then staying at the Grosvenor Hotel, but whose name it would be indiscreet to mention. On one of these occasions, a gentleman, with beard and whiskers, and therefore not easily recognisable, happened to be in the room when Bradlaugh was announced. At his request, no introduction took place, and an hour’s conversation ensued, during which time Bradlaugh expressed freely all his opinions, and was delighted with the clever replies and conversational powers of the stranger. A little later, M. Chevreau entered, and, bowing very low, addressed the stranger as ‘ Monseigneur.’ This puts Bradlaugh on the alert, and, in spite of the beard, he now recognised that he had been speaking with Prince Jérôme Napoleon. The ice was, however, broken, and ever since that day Bradlaugh has always felt sincere friendship and admiration for Prince Napoleon, in spite of his being a Bonaparte.

“Bradlaugh imagines, however, that Prince Napoleon has been generally and very widely misunderstood. As a Freethinker, as a man of great talent, and independent spirit, he naturally excited Bradlaugh’s interest ; a feeling which was reciprocated, for Prince Napoleon not only went to hear Bradlaugh lecture at the Dialectical Society, but he visited the Hall of Science on several occasions. On the other hand, when Bradlaugh was able to spend a few days in Paris, he generally visited Prince Jérôme, sometimes M. Emile de Girardin, and also the amiable Comtesse, who decided him to take up the cause of France. His intimacy with M. de Girardin exposed him, in 1871, to many attacks from the French Republican party ; but Bradlaugh now points to the fact that M. de Girardin sits in the Republican Senate, in consequence of the support given him by M. Gambetta and M. Louis Blanc.

“With respect to Prince Jérôme, who has recently become the head of the Bonaparte family, Bradlaugh is convinced that he has no ambition to reign over France. He has had many opportunities of witnessing what has passed behind the scenes, and has no belief in

Prince Jérôme's designs to re-establish the Empire. If, however, he is in this respect mistaken, no consideration of personal friendship would hinder his doing all in his power to prevent the downfall of the French Republican Government. Bradlaugh would oppose tooth and nail any pretender, even though such action were to bring him in conflict with his old friend Prince Jérôme."

We are not informed of the name of this "amiable countess." She was the successor of "the prettiest housemaid in Canonbury Square," and the predecessor of Mrs Besant, the parson's wife; and it is likely that all three were "countesses" alike. As a working collaborator, the "countess" accompanied Mr Bradlaugh in his provincial tours, and a great deal of mystery was made in secular halls as to her identity. This was in the epoch of Mr Bradlaugh's impressionable activity, after his mind had become saturated with the Neo-Malthusian doctrine that the female portion of the community should be viewed as members of one universal harem. With one bold lady, Mr Bradlaugh's name had been bracketed after his separation from Mrs Bradlaugh, and his *convenient* residence in Turner Street, at a rental of three shillings and sixpence per week. This lady might not have been as fair as a French "countess," but it was certainly ungallant for Mr Bradlaugh to repudiate an intimate acquaintance, with the brusque remark,—“You may impeach my morality, but, for heaven's sake, don't insult my taste.” In this matter, doubtless, Mr Bradlaugh will be pardoned by the fair sex for his reputed gallantries, but it seems very probable that the "countess" who interviewed him

was of the same class as many who usurp titles as *articles de Paris*. If we, in England, address every tradesman in his private capacity as an esquire, we ought to reciprocate the compliment, and recognise the heraldic assumption of every foreign count or countess who may inform us that they are entitled to such rank. It was a new sensation for the Secularists to find a live "countess" masquerading with Mr Bradlaugh in support of the French Republic. It was a parallel case to that of the enterprising gentleman who entered the French fortress to negotiate, upon the strength of a *carte-de-visite*, and who mystified both the Empress and Bazaine, as well as the Emperor William and Bismarck. It was a new sensation. At this time, Mr Bradlaugh had found that politics was a better-paying game than anti-Christian lectures. Plon-Plon, who during his cousin's reign was always at cross-purposes with Eugenie, was, at the time of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, yachting in the north seas. He hurried back to France, but he was not trusted by the Republicans, whose cause he had always championed. He wanted foreign support in England to work up a dynasty of his own. He was a Freethinker as well as a Republican, and he thought that he could have no more suitable instrument to effect his purpose than Mr Bradlaugh, which reminds one of that period when our fleet was sold to the King of France, and the accompanying French vessels, supposed to be our allies, only attended to see that our sailors did the work for which

our king had been paid. Mr Bradlaugh was permitted to see Plon-Plon at the Grosvenor Hotel, but the work which he undertook to do had to be superintended by the "countess" who inspired him in the interest of the Republican and Freethinking branch of the Napoleons.

The Commune intervened, and Mr Bradlaugh proceeded to Paris, as an Ambassador from the English Gutter to the French Gutter. He relied upon the position which he had established with the Gambetta Government; but Thiers was in power then. He was arrested at Calais, until M. Thiers was communicated with by telegram, and after two days' detention, Jules Favre despatched a telegram saying,—"*Empêchez M. Bradlaugh d'entrer à Paris à tout prix.*" The fact had become known to M. Thiers that the tongue of Mr Bradlaugh had been purchased by an agent of Prince Jérôme, and his presence in France was prohibited. He had tried to propitiate two parties, the Republican Napoleons, who were dissatisfied with the pro-clerical views of the Emperor, and the Commune, which was supposed to be as open to purchase as an ordinary English mob. When the Communist leaders fell, Mr Bradlaugh strove to identify himself with their views, by collecting money for them, so as to keep their favour on behalf of Prince Jérôme when the time came to put forward his claims, and the Communists rejected with scorn the offer of subscriptions, on the ground that Mr Bradlaugh was "an English Reactionist."

CHAPTER XIV.

Prepares and delivers Course of Lectures on "The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick"—Educating His Disciples re the Overthrow of Royalty—Gross Inconsistency—Creating Republican Clubs—Wishes a Political Advertisement, and requires a Holiday at the Expense of the Public—Conference at Birmingham—Resolutions—Quintessence of Impudence—On the Road to Madrid—Banquet in Madrid—Alleges that He was serenaded—Strange Statements—How He gulled the Public into ministering to His Vanity—The True Story of the Visit to Madrid—The "Honesty" of the Transaction.

WHEN the excitement attendant on the Franco-German War had subsided, Mr Bradlaugh prepared a course of lectures on the "Impeachment of the House of Brunswick," for delivery to a class of audience different to those persons who congregate at the "Hall of Science." The composition of the lectures showed an attempt to translate the inimitable satire of Thackeray's lectures on the "Four Georges" into the sarcastic language calculated to meet the taste of extreme politicians who, doubtless, were ignorant of the labours of the author of "Vanity Fair." Thackeray had succeeded with the educated, and "Iconoclast" considered that he would strike a new departure for the mob on the lines of the "Four Georges." The *new* point which he sought to bring before the public was that the Guelphs occupy the English throne by a purely parliamentary title,—

that the Act of Settlement—the foundation of the right by which our sovereigns rule—is open to be repealed, and with it the *déchéance* of the Brunswick dynasty is thereby pronounced, by which a British Republic may be proclaimed by the Parliament which cuts this Gordian knot. Mr Bradlaugh put this idea forward as if it were a great legal discovery; whereas, on the contrary, it is known by every lawyer to be one of the oldest precedents in our parliamentary history. It was decided in the Middle Ages, when Henry IV. was recognised by our Parliament. It was confirmed when Henry VII. obtained the Crown. It was the principle laid down in the Convention Parliament which declared the Crown vacant, and took away the titular dignity from James II., in order to give it to William and Mary. When the children of Queen Anne died, the Act of Settlement was passed, which vested the heirship in the Crown in the descendants of the Electress Sophia, through whom the House of Brunswick obtained the Throne. There was then nothing at all novel in the method proposed by Mr Bradlaugh. It was, however, the opening of a new line of advocacy to discuss this subject publicly, and especially so as Mr Bradlaugh was then anxious to pose as the founder of the Republican movement in England. In order to popularise his new bantling, he encouraged his followers to put him forward as the coming First President of the British Republic. Those lectures were delivered in the largest halls in the kingdom. They were a novelty. They “took” so well

in England that he resolved to follow the example of Charles Dickens, and make an American "progress," where an attack on the institutions of his country would obtain for him that Irish support which, he thought, was necessary to make his name conspicuous, the Irish in England having contemptuously opposed him on account of his Atheism. There was, of course, a central "Republican Society" got up, with subsidiary Brotherhoods, for which "funds" were required. There are always "funds" wanted for every new political fad of Mr Bradlaugh. While this series of lectures was being delivered, Mr Bradlaugh was subjected to many inquiries as to the proposed British Republic. It may now be very convenient to deny the utterances which he made to his friends at that period as to what should be done upon the *next demise of the Crown*. Mr Bradlaugh made no secret to his followers as to what his intentions were, and as to what should be done when that event arrived. His friends throughout the country asserted, on his behalf, that he (Mr Bradlaugh) should object to the Prince of Wales succeeding his Royal Mother. He was quite willing that existing life-interests should be respected, but he considered that no new ones should be created. When asked what would be the course he should adopt, he replied that it would be premature to disclose his plans, but he added that the example of Paris after Sedan might be followed in England, unless a "Monster Meeting" in Hyde Park should declare the inauguration of the British Republic

—the Presidency of which was to be conferred on Mr Bradlaugh, and the Vice-Presidency on the late Mr Odger. These views were said to have emanated from the Republican leader. At that time, the Prince of Wales was extremely unpopular, and his name was frequently introduced into Mr Bradlaugh's numerous discourses. This was, however, before the illness which His Royal Highness experienced. Since that period, when the wave of popularity set in by which the Prince of Wales has become, as a leader of "Society," the most popular man in his mother's dominions, Mr Bradlaugh has dropped all those muttered threats as to heading a Parliamentary Revolution to change, by law, the occupant of the throne, and substitute an Elective President in her place. He has even gone so far as to say that if it were proposed to have an *immediate* English Republic he would not hold up his hand for it. His design was to "educate the public" to the Republican standard of liberty.

In his "Impeachment of the House of Brunswick," and the lectures delivered on the subject in the United States, Mr Bradlaugh made some very casuistic distinctions as to what might be done, and what should not be attempted to be done, by his disciples. He said, "It was treason to seek to overthrow the Monarchy by force, or by any great assembly in which they voted that it should be overthrown, but it was *perfectly lawful* for them to make *an organisation* for the *purpose of overthrowing* the Monarchy, so long as they might do so

by making a party in Parliament who should carry a Statute for the purpose which they wanted." He told his friends that it was illegal to use force (a revolution) to win rights they did not possess; but it was justifiable to use force in protecting the rights they had.

This policy, pursued by an avowed Republican, can be justified as a legitimate method of attack on the British constitution, but it may be fairly objected to as an act of political dishonesty on the part of Mr Bradlaugh, as he was at that time a candidate for a parliamentary seat: and afterwards when he was elected, he first ostentatiously refused to take the oath as binding on his conscience, and subsequently offered to take the oath and swear true allegiance to the Queen whose throne he was plotting to overthrow. Again, in speaking of the Prince of Wales, he said,—“He is no Prince of ours,” and, “I was no party to the agreement that he should be our Prince.” After giving vent to those declamations, Mr Bradlaugh spent some years vainly endeavouring to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen he abjured outside the House of Commons, while he was anxiously willing to become her liegeman inside Parliament. The conduct of such men as Michael Davitt shows better grit. Davitt is as much opposed to British Royalty as is Mr Bradlaugh, but his conscience will not allow him to take an oath, and then commit perjury before God or degrade himself before man, by obtaining an honour at the expense of an untruth.

At the Birmingham Conference, Mr Bradlaugh, in

describing his seditious conspiracy for overthrowing the monarchy, said:—"They" (the Royal Family) "would not have the right of British-born subjects, but the same right as naturalised foreigners." This remark was received with *loud applause*.

Doubtless Mr Bradlaugh's Republican ideas were fostered by the speeches which Sir Charles Dilke had then made in favour of the Republican scheme. Even Her Majesty could hardly credit the conduct of the young statesman she had so frequently kissed when he was but a baby. Sir Charles Dilke was likely to prove a formidable rival. Besides Sir Charles Dilke, he had a democratic competitor in the Republican programme, a gentleman of the name of John de Morgan, who cultivated the Irish Nationalists. Mr Morgan's aristocratic prefix "de" irritated Mr Bradlaugh's love of democratic equality in surnames. De Morgan got up the rival National Republican Brotherhood, and was politely denounced by Mr Bradlaugh as "the man Morgan." To keep the field clear for himself, Mr Bradlaugh, through his journal, set to work in raising Republican Clubs. He found his readiest method was to duplicate the existing Secular Societies, of which he was President, and advise them to call themselves Republican Societies, in addition to that of Secularist Societies. By this means fifty Republican organisations were instantly created, each with a secretary and staff of officers ready for writing letters to the press and preparing petitions to Parliament in favour of the new bogus movement.

Mr Bradlaugh then wished for a holiday at the public expense. He was tired of Italy and France. He determined to try Spain. A new Republic had been inaugurated at Madrid, where General Prim, himself a Republican, had only a few years previously declared that there was no possibility of a Republic, because of the absence of Republicans. All that Mr Bradlaugh wanted was a mandate from the English Republicans, and sufficient travelling expenses to enable him to go to Spain. He obtained his expenses in a unique manner. He made business pay for pleasure. A Republican Conference was called at Birmingham in May 1873. How this was worked up, will be seen from "Notices to Correspondents" (March 16, 1873),—"W. T. suggests an address of sympathy and congratulation to the Spanish Republicans. At present the position of Señor Pi y Margal and Señor Castelar is very difficult, *and any moral support of a really useful character ought to involve the official recognition of the Spanish Republic by our Government.*" The next step was to call upon the Hall of Science people (*quá* Republican Club) to puff the project. On the 5th May, a meeting is called at the Hall of Science to further the proposal. Amongst the speakers I find the name of Adolphe SMITH, who, perhaps, is the same gentleman known as Adolphe Headingley. On the 8th, Mr Bradlaugh presided at the London Republican Club—which is the same place, but this time described as "Old Street," by way of ringing the changes, to mystify the people who were ignorant

that the Hall of Science is opposite the Lunatic Asylum of St Luke's—for the purpose of electing himself and Mr Foote as delegates to the Birmingham Conference, and for holding a Court of Appeal against the Sheffield Republican Club, in the case of "the *man* Morgan." The report says, "The secretary read a circular from the Sheffield Republican Club, entitled 'Bradlaugh *v.* De Morgan,' in which it is stated that, having heard Mr De Morgan's defence, the Sheffield Committee of Inquiry is perfectly assured that Mr Bradlaugh's charges against Mr De Morgan are utterly false, and that Mr De Morgan is worthy the support of all *true* Republicans." The following resolution was unanimously agreed to:—"That this London Republican Club is of opinion that the investigation of the charges preferred by Mr Bradlaugh against Mr De Morgan has been judicially conducted, and until Mr De Morgan publicly explains away those charges to the general satisfaction, it can place no confidence whatever in him." Mr Foote adduced further charges against Mr De Morgan, and maintained, "that even if Mr Bradlaugh's charges were untrue—as they most certainly were not—it would still be a disgrace *were the Republican party to countenance a conceited young man who, not content with the name given him by his parents, made various deceptive alterations in it, and who went about the country promulgating physical force principles, and proclaiming that the leading London reformers, notably Mr Odger, were sold like sheep for so much money.*" The only correction to

be made in the latter sentence was, that they sold themselves, and threw their dupes into the bargain. When the Conference assembled, it is said that "no fewer than eight London societies and forty provincial towns sent delegates. Thus there were present at this conference the representatives of forty-eight Republican societies and organisations, actually existing in almost all the important towns of the country, and a great many weaker bodies, unable to send delegates, forwarded letters of adherence." This is the vague statement which generally accompanies a description of this class of Institution. Out of the "eight London societies," it would be very doubtful if, with all the members congregated together, they would fill more than two tram-cars. But the description of those members sounds well, and imposes upon the credulity of those who do not look below the surface. At the close of the Conference, there was a meeting at the Birmingham Town Hall. The report in connection with this meeting runs thus:—"After passing a number of resolutions proclaiming Republican principles, and establishing a 'National Republican League,' Mr Funnell, representing the German section of a London Society called the 'UNIVERSAL REPUBLICAN LEAGUE,' which, in keeping with its name, possessed many foreign members, and took special interest in foreign affairs, proposed:—

"That this Conference desires to express its sympathy with Spain, in its struggle to establish a Republican Government; its abhorrence at the atrocities committed

by the Carlists in the interests of a Monarchical Government; and also expresses its indignation at the non-recognition of the Spanish Government by the British Government; and that Mr Bradlaugh be empowered to present the same to Señor Castelar, on behalf of the Conference."

The impudence and absurdity of such a resolution is manifest to any person who will take the trouble to analyse the scheme. A representative of a German pot-house Society, whose members, taken even collectively, could not plume themselves on the possession of a clean shirt, passed a resolution, while yet enjoying the protection of our laws, complaining that the English Government did not do what those persons, calling themselves a Republican Conference, thought fit to demand. If such a resolution had been necessary, it should have been left to an Englishman to propose its adoption.

Mr Bradlaugh immediately started for Madrid to congratulate the Spanish Republicans, "with the cheers of the Town Hall meeting still ringing in his ears." He passed through France, and was dining at the Orleans Station while Gambetta was seeing a friend off to Bordeaux. This afforded an opportunity of setting the telegraph in motion, to "inspire" the Madrid newspapers with the intimation that Mr Bradlaugh and M. Gambetta had had a private conference on foreign affairs, and more especially on the Spanish mission of Mr Bradlaugh. This was about as true and realistic as the *bona fides* of the Birmingham Conference. When he reached Irun,

the railway had been cut by the Carlists. He hired a *calèche* with two horses, and informed the driver, that "if he dared to stop voluntarily when meeting any Carlists he (Mr Bradlaugh) would fire at him," taking care, as he said this, to keep his revolver in position. In another version, Mr Bradlaugh, without solicitation, tells us that he kept his revolver *out of sight* whilst addressing the driver. On the road to St Sebastian he was obliged to travel by the *diligence*. He met with the usual signs of Spanish Civil War. Mr Bradlaugh was more fortunate in his discoveries than was Mr G. A. Sala, who was sent out as war-correspondent to the Spanish Revolution, but who returned home without being able to discover it. Ultimately, after a variety of invented adventures, which he has graphically described, Mr Bradlaugh reached Madrid. "He immediately waited on Señor Castelar, the then Foreign Minister, to whom he presented, with all due formality, the Resolution of the Birmingham Conference." The Spanish Minister received the document with the high-flown compliments of a hidalgo. He little suspected that the whole transaction was a hoax, and that the principal actor had arranged the plot as a political advertisement of himself.

Not to be outdone in politeness, an official reply was received in due course, and then followed an invitation to a State Banquet, which was duly provided in honour of the Birmingham Republican Plenipotentiary! The Alcalde of Madrid, the Deputy of Madrid, the President of the Federal Centre, and the

Provincial Deputies, signed the Invitation, while a few supplementary Generals, Colonels, and Privates attached their autographs, as approving of the object for which Mr Bradlaugh had appeared. The Alcalde waited upon the distinguished guest to escort him to the banquet, where eighty leading Spanish Republicans were already assembled to do him honour. The chair was taken by Señor Garcia Lopez, who introduced Mr Bradlaugh in a speech couched in the following words:—

“Caballero Bradlaugh, the Alcalde of Madrid, her Cortes Deputies, her *Diputacion Provincial*, her Councillors, the Chiefs of her Battalions of Volunteers of the Republic, the Presidents of the Popular Clubs, and the Representatives of the Press—all members of the Spanish Federal Republican Party—are those whom you see gathered here, and they thank you for the honour you have done them in accepting their cordial offer of a modest repast.”

A speech followed, explaining the prospects of the Republican party in Spain, which concluded with a toast highly eulogising the British Republican Leader and the Republicans who had sent him on his Spanish mission. Mr Bradlaugh replied in English, his speech being translated into Spanish, and in reply to the Editor of the *Epoca*, who had obtained a glimmering of the truth, that the plenipotentiary represented but a very few nobodies, Mr Bradlaugh stated that all great reforms came from minorities. He said:—

“With pride instead of shame I admit, Señors, that

it is the minority whose ambassador I am to you. To the minority I belong; and we are extending our small minority, so that *I have little doubt that within twenty years or less*, we shall have the Republic in England" (Cries of "Now, now!") "sending its official Ambassador to the Republic of Spain. I trust, if I live, I shall then be able, on behalf of Republican England, to revisit Republican Spain, and find her natural wealth developed, and the ancient glory of her name restored, and maintained in a path of peaceful progress, useful to herself and all mankind. I repeat, I shall be quite content if we have secured the Republic of England in twenty years." (Here the speaker was interrupted by cries of "Now, now!" "At once!") "Speaking for myself, I may answer that if a Republic could come to-morrow in England without force, without bloodshed, without crime, without ruined cities and anger-maddened peoples, then I would be the first to greet it and to serve it; but our Republic will, I trust, come nursed by the school, the brain, the pen, and the tongue, and not heralded by the cannon's roar, or carved by the sword. Hence it is that I say I should prefer to work, even for twenty years, to strengthen men's brains, so that they may know how to keep the Republic when they have won it, and that it may be an indestructible Republic, which shall honour the destinies of the people of England, and serve as guide as well as mother to the English-speaking races throughout the world."

When this speech was concluded, Señor Ocon rose to inform the Plenipotentiary of the expected British Republic that he was the Secretary-General to the Council of Ministers, who sent him, on their behalf, to add to their congratulations. The Minister of the Colonies sent his card and a box of (Government?) cigars, for the guests at this remarkable "free-and-easy." After the speeches were concluded, the whole of Mr Bradlaugh's entertainers insisted on seeing him to his hotel, where a *fresh series* of deputations called upon him until half-past two the next morning. His biographical amanuensis says: "In the street and the Puerta del Sol an immense but orderly crowd waited patiently from midnight till nearly three in the morning. During the whole of that time the two splendid bands of the artillery and the engineers, sent specially by the Minister of War, serenaded Bradlaugh, concluding their concert with the 'Spanish Republican Hymn' and the 'Marseillaise.' At last, and after repeated entreaties from the vast crowd, Bradlaugh was persuaded to address them from the balcony of his hotel. He spoke in French, a language more likely to be understood than English, and said:—

"Peuple de Madrid, je regrette sincèrement que je ne puis pas vous parler dans votre propre langue parceque touché au cœur par la démonstration que vous m'avez faite j'ai besoin de paroles chaleureuses pour traduire ma pensée de reconnaissance. Je vous souhaite la paix, la prospérité, et l'ordre, et

je crie de tout mon âme. ‘Vivad la Republica Española!’”

It is to be hoped that those Spanish democrats understood the plenipotentiary's speech. It is extremely doubtful if an address in French delivered either at the "Hall of Science" or on Clerkenwell Green would be any better understood than in the Puerta del Sol, where Mr G. A. Sala alleges that the penniless citizen of Madrid sleeps in his poncho. Possibly such an amount of oratory had disturbed the usual boarders, and, if their sleep had been prevented, nothing was more likely than that they should mix with the deputations, in the anticipation of getting a supper at the price of their disturbed repose. Doubtless, like their English congeners, they would be greatly disappointed if refreshments were not supplied by the messenger of brotherhood, who had travelled from Birmingham. Perhaps they were satisfied with the *largesse* bestowed, as the "begging-box" was rattled for a long time to pay the expenses of this Quixotic enterprise. Mr Bradlaugh's amanuensis concludes his account with a naïve confession that "during Bradlaugh's brief stay in Madrid, he enjoyed several pleasant interviews with Señor Emilio Castelar and many other prominent men, all equally desirous to do honour to the delegate of the English Republican party, and to welcome a leader *whose ability and popularity has always been more readily recognised abroad than among the ruling classes in England.* In this instance, also, it was the

New York World, and not the English press, that gave the best account of these remarkable proceedings in the Spanish capital. After all these manœuvres, it was urged that it would be most imprudent in Bradlaugh to return homewards through the Carlists' country, and therefore he travelled *via* Alar del Rey, and after some days' detention succeeded in obtaining a ship from Santander to Bordeaux."

To read the above statement without a smile is a severe task upon ordinary credulity. Fourteen years out of the twenty set apart for the formation of the British Republic have passed away, and how much nearer are we to the goal? The Spanish Republic soon died a natural death for want of Republicans. If the ruling authorities of Madrid were so simple as to take the self-nominated plenipotentiary from Birmingham *au sérieux*, they deserved to be swept away as political incapables. There is, however, an explanation of this *fiasco* which borders on the ludicrous, and it shows the cleverness of Mr Bradlaugh in using the public as his tool to minister to his vanity and service. The real cause of this escapade has never been disclosed. If Mr Bradlaugh was ready to dupe the Republican puppets who clothed him with a quasi-authority, he did not dupe himself. Mr Bradlaugh, being well known at Judges Chambers, was considered by a legal firm to be a likely person to go abroad to take evidence in a pending suit where the Portuguese Government was concerned. A commission was appointed to take evi-

dence, and it was necessary that the solicitors should either go or send a representative to Lisbon, and also to a place some distance in the interior.

Mr Bradlaugh waited upon the solicitor who represented the Portuguese Government, and inquired if he would object to his (Mr Bradlaugh's) representing the solicitor on the other side. (Mr Bradlaugh was not a qualified solicitor, and might have been objected to on that ground.) Mr Merriman was acquainted with Mr Bradlaugh, and raised no objection.

"When will you be ready to start, and what route will you take?" inquired Mr Merriman.

"Oh," replied Mr Bradlaugh, "I shall be prepared to start within a few days, and I have decided to go across the Pyrenees."

"That," rejoined the solicitor, "will not suit me. I do not want to fall amongst the Carlists. I shall go to Portugal by sea, and I will meet you at Lisbon."

Mr Merriman went by steamer, and waited a fortnight for the arrival of Mr Bradlaugh, but there were no signs of his appearance—neither letter, telegram, nor message reached Lisbon to say that Mr Bradlaugh was coming. The litigants grew impatient, and called upon Mr Merriman to proceed to execute his commission. He travelled to the town where the inquiry was to take place. The commission was duly opened before the Notary, who made his report that the English solicitor of the Portuguese Government was present, but no one appeared on the opposite side. The commission was

closed. The solicitor returned to Lisbon, after an absence of three weeks. What was his surprise to find an account in a newspaper of the political travesty at Madrid, where his paid colleague was posing as a Republican delegate! Mr Merriman returned to London, where he soon after met Mr Bradlaugh, who coolly told him that his political business was more important to him than his legal commission.

How Mr Bradlaugh's employer was satisfied with his conduct is a matter which one would be curious to know. It may, however, be safely predicated that Mr Bradlaugh kept this morsel of secret history quiet from the National Republican League. This statement of undoubted facts presents matter of so grave a nature as to seriously imperil the political honesty of a member of the House of Commons, and it affords reason to doubt whether Mr Bradlaugh would not befool his Northampton constituents in like manner as he befooled his Republican dupes, in the event of his being selected as a member of a Radical Ministry. In the particulars given above of the Spanish *fiasco*, I have merely described a series of facts which are known to only a few persons. At this point I pause, to give the facts from the pen of the other principal actor, whose written statement, which is set out in the next chapter, has been handed to the author by Mr Merriman.

CHAPTER XV.

De Bristo v. Hillel—The Story told by the Plaintiff's Solicitor—Bradlaugh's Connection with Hillel—His Alleged Connection with Messrs Lewis & Lewis—Engaged to take Evidence in Portugal—Ignores his Engagement, after being paid, and goes to Madrid—Imposing upon his Republican Dupes—Superhuman Cunning—Seven Distinct Charges against His Integrity—Betrayal of Señor Castelar, etc.

THE facts alleged in the foregoing chapter were principally gathered from the *National Reformer*, Mr Bradlaugh's own journal, and from information given to me by persons who had assisted in the scheme. The Merriman episode had been communicated to me by a gentleman of Mr Bradlaugh's own peculiar persuasion. Wishing to verify the matter upon independent grounds I sought out Mr Merriman, who, in reply to my interrogations, endorsed generally what I had already written in the preceding chapter. I did not inform Mr Merriman of what I had already prepared, and he was and is ignorant of what had been previously written. His statement was in substance so near the description already given to me, that I have not altered a sentence of the foregoing chapter. For the satisfaction of my readers, I requested Mr Merriman to commit the matter to writing. He complied with my request; and my readers are in a position to judge for

themselves as to the conclusions I hereafter draw. It is as pretty an escapade as that visit to Madrid by another "Charles," who, two and a half centuries ago, rushed *incog.* to the Spanish capital in search of an Infanta.

The story of *Hillel v. the King of Portugal*, according to Mr Merriman, is as follows:—

"The account of Mr Bradlaugh's journey and voyages from Birmingham to Madrid, and homewards, as told by Mr Headingley, may be true, as far as it goes, but is certainly not the whole truth of the matter, and I will therefore supplement that remarkable narrative by relating the omitted circumstances.

"In passing, I am tempted to observe that the hero of the story is to be fairly held responsible for the suppression of the circumstances I will relate, because, although the book referred to purports to have been written by one 'Adolphe S. Headingley,' the facts he discloses were presumably given to the writer of that remarkable narrative by Mr Bradlaugh; and I also find that it was avowedly printed by Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, so that the latter could not have been ignorant of what the volume contained, and omitted to tell.

"I have, under the circumstances, no objection to repeat to you that which is an amusing reminiscence of my professional life, and I place no restriction upon the use you may choose to make of the information thus supplied to you.

"In the year 1873, I was acting as solicitor for the plaintiff in a Chancery suit, entitled *De Bristo v. Hillel*, and the defendant sought and obtained leave to take the evidence of a Portuguese statesman at Lisbon, under a Commission, of which I had, of course, what is called 'the Carriage.' In due course, Mr Rawes, of Lisbon, a merchant of the highest character, whose name is almost as well known in the City of London as in Lisbon, was appointed Commissioner. The limits of time for taking the evidence were as usual fixed, and were as well known to the defendant as to myself and others concerned. The necessary notices were given to Messrs Lewis & Lewis, the defendant's solicitors, and I sent out to Portugal an articulated clerk, who had the management, under my supervision,

of my Chancery business, to watch the interest of the plaintiff at this examination. On the day fixed, Count Samodaes, an ex-Finance Minister of Portugal (who had voluntarily come all the way from his seat in a suburb of Oporto—a ten or twelve hours' ride by railway, and a distance of about two hundred miles) presented himself to give evidence. The Commission was, in fact, formally opened at the Ministry of Finance in Lisbon, as arranged and notified. Mr Rawes was there, the plaintiff, by his legal representative, was there, the noble Count was there, but one person to the suit was not there, in person, by council, solicitor, or agent. The absentee was the defendant, who had sworn that the evidence of Count Samodaes was essential to his case. Nothing could, however, be further done by us, and all the Commissioner could do was to report, in writing, on the face of the Commission, of the defendant's (Hillel's) absence, seal up the document, and post it to the Court. My client, however, had to pay the heavy costs of this judicial farce, which, like all subsequent heavy costs (save of £200, of which more anon), they were never able to obtain or recover.

“Another and greater surprise, however, immediately awaited us. The defendant's counsel objected to the reception of Rawes' returned Commission, and coolly asked that a second opportunity should be afforded to the defendant to get the essential evidence of Count Samodaes, because our notice was in some trivial respect too vague or indefinite. Our counsel ridiculed the allegation, and urged with irresistible cogency that if the objection was *bonâ fide*, it would have been taken as soon as it was served on Messrs Lewis & Lewis, and not postponed until after the expense had been incurred by us. The Vice-Chancellor declared that the objection was absurd; that the notice was sufficient, and we should then have had a judgment or order in the plaintiff's favour, but for one of those peculiar ‘flukes’ which oftentimes prolong litigation. A conversation appears to have taken place between the opposing counsel, in which it was urged, and seems to have been conceded, that Hillel would make a show of grievance if we pressed our victory, and so it was agreed that a second Commission should be sent out, to give him another opportunity of obtaining the indispensable evidence of Count Samodaes.

“*Again*, at the great expense of my client, the same farce was played out. The second Commission was duly opened. Count Samodaes again put himself to the trouble and inconvenience of

leaving his large estates (which he himself watchfully cultivated) and going to Lisbon to meet the terrible Hillel or his skilful advocates. My clerk was there, but again there was an absentee—the defendant, to whom the evidence of the Count was, it had been said, a matter of life and death.

“This surprise was, however, not the greatest we were to encounter. When the returned SECOND Commission was opened in Court the defendant’s counsel pertinaciously insisted that I had neglected something or other; which allegation carried absurdity on its face, and was laughed out of Court, and here again followed a still more extraordinary arrangement.

“The evidence of Count Samodaes having been so absolutely essential to the defendant, he plaintively urged his counsel that if another opportunity were afforded him of obtaining it, he would consent to any reasonable terms that might be suggested by the plaintiff, if the Vice-Chancellor would grant another—a third—Commission, for that purpose. The Vice-Chancellor peremptorily refused this, unless the plaintiff consented. A conference took place, and it was arranged that Hillel should have his THIRD Commission, if he paid the plaintiff beforehand the sum of £200 towards his costs of what afterwards proved a THIRD farce.

“Now, let me explain that I was not present at Lincoln’s Inn on the occasions when these Commissions were so granted.

“Within a day or two—will it be believed—the sum of £200 was paid to me, and the Commission issued once more to examine Count Samodaes.

“I now resolved to take the business more thoroughly into my own hands and resolved to follow that Commission to Portugal myself.

“An incident somewhat amusing next ensued. I, of course, communicated with Count Samodaes, who wrote me a letter in English, in which he said, ‘I have a great respect for your English Court of Chancery, but I have already twice travelled all the way from Oporto to Lisbon at its request. If it wants me again, it must come to me. I go immediately to my estate at Samodaes, near Lamego, to get in my vintages, and you must meet me in that city at your convenience.’

“It is needless to say that the decision of Count Samodaes allowed of no argument against it. It was so reasonable, that compliance was the only course for us to adopt, and we made arrangements accordingly.

"Now came upon us another surprise. I was sitting in my office in Queen Street, City, one day when the name came to me through the 'call-clerk's' whistle, 'Mr Bradlaugh wants to see you particularly, and is in a hurry.' 'Send him in,' was the prompt reply. In walked the tall and burly form of 'Iconoclast,' and this was the conversation which ensued, as I distinctly recollect it.

"*Re Hillel*,' said he, 'I hear that you are going out to Portugal yourself, next time.' 'That's true,' said I; 'but what has that to do with you?' 'Oh! don't you know,' said he, 'Hillel's an old friend of mine? I manage all his affairs. I am conducting this suit for him. Lewis & Lewis are only nominally the solicitors; I do all the work. I thought you would have traced my hand and mind in the affidavits and papers.'

"I could not repress a smile, but replied,—'That may be as you say, but I can only deal with Lewis & Lewis, as they are the solicitors on the record; and, in fact, I heard nothing, until now, of your connection with the defendant or the suit.'

"'Of course,' he rejoined, 'the business will go on in the same way, I having only called to ask you whether you will object to my appearing before the Commissioner as Lewis & Lewis?'

"'Well,' I said, 'I don't know that I have the right to take such an objection, but I shall certainly not take it, if I have the right.'

"'So I supposed,' added he; 'but I thought that I would see you about it, so as to avoid any difficulty or dispute.'

"This point settled, we proceeded to talk about our journeys, the hotels we intended to stay at, and agreed to smooth all difficulties before the Commissioner, or rather, to allow of none being raised on either side. Mr Bradlaugh wanted me to travel with him, but this I declined. He was going across the Pyrenees; I told him that I preferred the sea voyage from Southampton to Lisbon. He gave me the information that I must cross the Bay of Biscay, and that it was rough water there, etc. I answered that the *mal de mer* never had upset me, and that I thought I could endure a few hours in those always more or less troubled waters. It was then seen that we could not be fellow-travellers. Hotels then came up for discussion. Had I ever been in Portugal? 'No.' The Hotel Centrale of Lisbon he was recommended to—it was a little Langham. I had already taken advice on that score, and had fixed on the Braganza, which was a very fine hotel, and I added that although I should raise no objection to his status under the Commission, it would not look

well to be seen hobnobbing, as if we were not opponents but near friends, on mutual pleasure bent.

"A detail or two of essential business had then to be arranged. On my arrival, I must call upon him—as it was thought that he, having the start, and as land travelling is quicker than sea voyaging, would set foot in Lisbon before me, and I was to introduce him to the Commissioner, etc. An hour or two after my arrival I walked from the Braganza to the Centrale, but no Mr Bradlaugh had been seen or heard of at that great establishment. Next day, a similar call and the like answer. So on, day after day, and no trace or sign of Charles Bradlaugh could be made or seen. No telegram and no letter came to me in explanation. At length I found that unless I started for Lamego, I should exhaust the time allowed for opening the Commission. The Commissioner informed me that I had not a day to spare, and that I had indeed run some risk already, as the road from Oporto to Lamego was then crowded by traffic, as the crisis of the vintage sale was then at its height.

"Hillel and Bradlaugh must take their fate, I thought. Next morning, I arranged to start for Oporto, and Mr Rawes telegraphed his brother at that place to hire a capacious waggonette, to carry some provisions, and sleep two persons for two nights, on their journey, as the interior wayside inns were not as sweet and clean as could be wished. I left word at the Centrale that I should sleep one night at the Hotel du Louvre, Oporto, and begged him to telegraph, and follow me by the first train after his arrival in Lisbon. No such telegram reached me in Oporto that night, as I had hoped, or the following morning, as I dared to expect.

"Away then we went from Oporto for Lamego, a pleasant ride indeed at starting, for our three horses rode up and down the hills, lying open to view at our feet—or hundreds, sometimes many hundreds of feet—below us ran the shallow River Douro, and all around were hills and valleys graced by the deep verdure of olive trees, and by trailing vines, the rich and rare grape of which yields matchless port to the *bon vivants* all over the world. Then we came to the foot of some tall mountain, up which no horses could drag us, and no mule can take anything, unless across his back; but here are our oxen awaiting us, and they, sure-footed and patient beasts, will draw us as we doze. Again we halt, and put up our oxen to rest and await our return. Horses are again in requisition, until we come to the second huge difficulty of carriage. This was at night, in

a dirty village at the base of a mountain. There is delay. I grow anxious. Mr Rawes has gone away in the black distance. He comes home after a while, and says,—‘Mr Merriman, you have waited too long for that man Bradlaugh. Our oxen have been taken by some vine-grower, and I can’t get another team.’ ‘You must, Mr Rawes!’ I passionately exclaimed. ‘If we don’t get to Lamego to-morrow, we are done. The Commission will have run out. Get oxen : pay any price for them. Away he goes, and comes back for a price, not a trifle. He has got oxen ; my mind is relieved ; we start. We get into Lamego mid-day on the last day.

“Lamego is a picturesque old cathedral town, but a small place. I beat about under guidance, but there is no Bradlaugh, nor any message for me at the post-office or elsewhere. The Commission is opened ; Count Samodæes is there ; I am there ; the Commissioner is there : the farce is played a third time, and so the matter ends, Mr Hillel’s £200 have been wasted, so far as he is concerned.

“On my homeward way, I thought that I should like to get a view of Spain, and while in my hotel in the Puerto del Sol, I took up an English paper. Lo, and behold ! Mr Bradlaugh, going to Portugal *via* Spain, has made a personal acquaintance with some Republicans, who have offered him a banquet, and he has dismissed Hillel and his suit from consideration, under the temptation so placed before his ambition.

“I am at home. In a short time afterwards, Mr Bradlaugh favours me with another call. ‘How did you like your visit to Portugal?’ he somewhat abruptly asked. ‘Very well in some respects,’ I answered ; ‘but where were you ? You nearly landed me in a mess,’ I added, with explanations to which he paid no regard. He merely observed, in the driest and most cynical manner,—‘Oh, I met the leaders of the Republican party in Spain, and they got up a banquet for me. That was of more importance to me than Hillel’s business, and you know that I couldn’t have done any good in Portugal if I had gone there.”

In a subsequent chapter the reader will find the story of Bradlaugh *v.* Lilly and Hedley. This litigation took its rise from the investigation of certain episodes in Mr Bradlaugh’s East Finsbury Election campaign, where he indignantly asked his opponents, “What

causes and what men have I sold?" The Rev. Brewin Grant took up the challenge, but the rev. gentleman was not aware of the Merriman interlude. I take up the gauntlet in regard to the Spanish Mission, and I allege:—

1. Mr Bradlaugh "sold" the Republicans by using them as puppets to clothe him with an authority to go to Spain when he had already (secretly) arranged to go to Portugal on business for which he had been paid.

2. He "sold" them by begging the money to pay his expenses, when they had already been provided for by his client Hillel.

3. He "sold" his client Hillel, by persuading him to pay Messrs. Merriman & Co. £200 as their professional expenses to go to Portugal on a Commission (irrespective of the money received for his own expenses), when it was never his intention to go to Portugal on behalf of his client, but to go to Spain for his own glorification.

4. He "sold" the Republicans in England by spreading the report that he was a Carlist prisoner, who only escaped by his own prowess and by the fear inspired by his revolver, which he admits to have kept out of sight.

5. He "sold" his patron by revealing, in public, sentiments alleged to have been confided to him by Señor Castelar respecting his political opponent, Marshal Serrano, which might have cost Castelar his life.

6. He "sold" the British Ambassador, whose office

he had usurped, by betraying information gained as to Sir Henry Layard having ordered a vessel by which the Marshal escaped.

7. He “sold” the Spaniards, by braggartly pretending that he represented a *bonâ fide* political party, and as soon as the Catholics discovered that the self-appointed Ambassador was Charles Bradlaugh, the Atheist, the Spanish Republic was dissolved, and Castelar was exiled.

These are the allegations I make against Mr Bradlaugh in connection with his Spanish Mission. At the risk of prolixity, I repeat, that when Mr Bradlaugh, in his dealings with Hillel, in engineering a Portuguese Loan, must have made the arrangements for going to Madrid, and it is evident that Hillel, his client, was the dupe who provided the money, unconscious of its destination. Two hundred pounds would not have been handed to Messrs Merriman & Co. for their expenses, without an equal amount being forthcoming for his own solicitors, irrespective of the law costs. Not only was the “Republican Embassy” Mr Bradlaugh’s own private speculation, organised by his own tools, and paid for by himself, but he made it the occasion of collecting subscriptions from those who were kept in profound ignorance of the Hillel transaction. The subscriptions obtained to defray his travelling and hotel expenses to and from Madrid—expenses incurred for the purpose of satisfying his egotistical ambition and vain-glory—were extracted

from poor men, many of whom had not sufficient food with which to satisfy the empty stomachs of their families. On the 8th June 1877, he says, in "Answers to Correspondents":—

"T. C. D.—At present Mr Bradlaugh *is still personally* £23 out of pocket, for expenses incurred by him in connection with the Birmingham Conference, but of this £23, £5 has been promised, and will probably be received."

It seems laughable to read how a "movement" started as a business speculation could be gravely spoken of; but the Spaniards were told that it was a genuine spontaneous feeling in England to start a Republican party, in opposition to the official representatives of Great Britain at Madrid. In one of the reports published on the 25th May 1877, in connection with a miserable little club where a dozen boosers could pass resolutions in favour of Mr Bradlaugh, I read, "That this meeting hereby accords its warm approval of the proceedings passed at the Birmingham Republican Conference, and more especially do we approve of the appointment of a delegate by the meeting to go to Madrid, as it will tend to show *that the conduct of our Government in not recognising the Spanish Government, although legally and peaceably established, is not in accordance with the sympathies of the majority of the people of this country.*" This was a nice story to take to Madrid, and tell at a public dinner, organised in the belief that those im-

puident fabrications were based on truth. He had even at that conference refused to sanction the proposal of a Republican paper, of which it was proposed that he should be editor, on account of "the stigma of his opinions," and yet this "stigma" was what he took with him to the most bigoted Roman Catholic country in Europe. He went straight off to Madrid with that "stigma;" and the horror which attached to Señor Castelar, as being his friend, was felt to be such by Christians of all denominations in Spain, that the record of Señor Castelar's embracing a blasphemer of God was of more value to the Carlists than would be ten regiments of soldiers and a fleet of ironclads. It has been truly said that from that octopus embrace of Castelar and Bradlaugh, the Republic of Spain was strangled at its birth.

Mr Bradlaugh "sold" Señor Castelar by turning informer, and by publishing a private conversation, or by inventing what he alleges to have been a private conversation, and then by publishing it. It is as follows:—"On the Army, my views were entirely opposed to those of Señor Castelar. Having heard superior officers openly using disloyal language, and having witnessed much insubordination amongst the military, I asked Castelar whether there might not be chances of a military pronunciamiento, with the intent of overthrowing the present Government?" He answered indignantly, "No." First he said the army was loyal to the core, and next, that former pronunciamientos had only succeeded because

they had the excuses of pretences in favour of liberty. I suggested a possible danger from Serrano, and the military following he might have amongst the officers. To this Señor Castelar replied,—“Serrano is not against the Republic, he is for Serrano.” This means that Serrano was an unprincipled person, who sought only his own interests. Now Marshal Serrano was the King-maker of Spain, and he had the universal reputation of being the father of the coming King, Alfonso. As it happened, Marshal Serrano succeeded to power, and he might have taken revenge for the contemptuous way in which his rival had made use of his name. Our Ambassador, Sir Henry Layard, as an act of international courtesy, had interested himself in securing a vessel at a seaport for the use of Marshal Serrano, when escaping from Madrid. On Mr Bradlaugh's arrival at the Spanish seaport, he had an interview with the shipping agent, who told him of the fact, and showed him our Ambassador's letter. The sham envoy published, on his return home, all that he knew, and sought to involve Sir Henry Layard in difficulties with the Spaniards. To make the matter more interesting, he suggests what might have been said by our Government, supposing that a Spanish Ambassador, in London, should have chartered a vessel for the escape of a Fenian leader. What our Ambassador did was a mark of courtesy to one who had been the Prime Minister of Spain, which was something more than the act of a Fenian conspirator, who uses dynamite as his political weapon. It was an act of common

humanity, and not an international offence, to assist in the escape of a political refugee; but Mr Bradlaugh thought it would damage the reputation of the Ambassador representing the British Government, and, therefore, he gave all the publicity he could to the fact he had discovered. He told the Spaniards, at his banquet, that "If our minister" (of whom he said he knew nothing) "looks indifferently on your new Republic; if he turns the cold shoulder on its earnest workers, I pray you, Spaniards, do not believe he represents the English people." Were people ever so gulled, either in Birmingham or in Madrid, as on the occasion of this Republican fiasco of Mr Bradlaugh?

Assuredly the Rev. Brewin Grant was justified in his reply to the audaciously ironical query, "What causes and what men have I sold?" Why, he has "sold" every cause, and all the men with whom he has come in contact. He has "sold" the cause of Radicalism by swallowing it bit by bit, to, if possible, secure ministerial honours; and he has "sold" the workingmen of Great Britain in tens of thousands by, *in formâ pauperis*, begging from them their pence while he had thousands of pounds safely invested, and was in receipt of £1100 a year.

CHAPTER XVI.

*Death of Mr Turberville.—Inquest—Bradlaugh present at Inquest—
Copy of Turberville's Letter—Turberville Legacy—Probate Action
—£2750 to Mr Bradlaugh—Is it true that Mr Bradlaugh's
Daughters nursed their Mother?*

SHORTLY before Mr Bradlaugh's visit to America, in 1875, an eccentric gentleman, Mr Turberville, brother to Mr Blackmore, the novelist, had the misfortune to have been poisoned, either by accident or design, and considerable sensation was evinced by those who had an interest in the gentleman's estate. One side insisted upon the theory of suicide, while the other insinuated that Mr Turberville had been murdered. It would not have troubled the inhabitants of Yeovil very much how this eccentric individual had taken his ticket to the land of the majority, provided he had not left a will, to the disappointment of his next-of-kin. The contents of his will were such as to create much dissension amongst the many legacy-hunters who, ghoul-like, gathered round the corpse of the unfortunate gentleman whose last hero was Mr Charles Bradlaugh. Little was known about the transaction until a local paper (*Eastern Post*, 4th Sept. 1875) pub-

lished the report of a lecture by Mrs Besant, who had been called upon suddenly to take Mr Bradlaugh's place on the platform. The particulars, brief as they are, were as follows:—

“Mrs Besant intimated that she had a message to convey from Mr Bradlaugh, containing a special apology for his absence, which was caused by his having been called away into the country on hearing that a gentleman had left him a large sum¹ of money. This gentleman, Mr Turberville, had made Mr Bradlaugh his sole executor and residuary legatee. The amount, after deducting a few sums left to scientific societies, was about £16,000, which would enable Mr Bradlaugh to liquidate such debts as had been the result, directly or indirectly, of Christian opposition and intolerance. Mr Turberville went to Yeovil and made acquaintance with a druggist named Maggs, and it was stated that he fell in love with Miss Maggs and altered his will in her favour. Mr Maggs was in the habit of supplying the club, and Mr Turberville used to be doctored by Miss Maggs' brother; but whether he poisoned himself, or was poisoned by someone, had not yet transpired. Mr Bradlaugh had gone to investigate the matter, and to attend the inquest; but no alteration of the will had been forthcoming. In his last moments, Mr Turberville caught hold of the arm of the ‘boots’ at the hotel where he was living, saying that he was a villain, and knew about the will.”

Mr Bradlaugh attended the inquest, and took a very prominent part in the inquiry. His evident contention was to rebut the theory of suicide, as that would probably have gone a long way to invalidate the many wills he had made, to the benefit of the next-of-kin. Those curious in such matters will derive information—which, after the compromise of the probate actions, I do not care to discuss—in the *Standard*, of the 10th and 11th September 1875, where the inferences of Mr Bradlaugh against the theory of suicide were plainly

shadowed. The position of Mr Maggs might have been serious if he had not been supported by the physician who gave evidence at the inquest. Mr Bradlaugh evidently suggested that Mr Turberville had been murdered, but the jury repudiated with scorn such an insinuation, and evinced their opinion by giving an ovation to Mr Maggs. The verdict of the Coroner's jury settled the dispute as to how Mr Turberville came by his death; but after this was disposed of, the legacy-hunters set in force the machinery of the Law Courts, and covert threats arose on all sides, which no doubt hastened the settlement of *six* actions, instituted to dispose of the accumulation of money which caused so many heart-burnings.

There is not in my possession much information which can throw light on this gentleman's career. It is said that the character of no man can be adequately analysed, until probate has been obtained for his will. The difficulty in this case arose from the voluminous nature of the Turberville testamentary dispositions. It may help to clear the air upon the subject, to quote a letter published in the *National Reformer*, which shows Mr Bradlaugh's side of the question. It is as follows:—

“The following letter, printed during the case, speaks for itself; we omit only one paragraph, personal to others:—

“‘22 MYDLETON SQUARE, PENTONVILLE,
20th April 1875.

“‘DEAR SIR,—I executed my will last evening, in the presence of two witnesses, Mr Truelove and Mr Shackleton, both being present at the same time in Mr Shackleton's parlour, at 1, Lawrence

Street, Arthur Street, New Oxford Street, who live much nearer here than you do, consequently I had no need to trouble you to come so far, and, as your time is valuable, I am glad to have managed it so. With the exception of a few legacies, I have left all I am possessed of—viz., two or three little farms in Devonshire, bringing in, I am sorry to say, only a very few hundreds yearly, and three little lots of land in Wales, only about three acres, and a little money in Consols, etc.—to Mr Charles Bradlaugh, and made him sole executor and residuary legatee, as a slight testimony of my immense admiration of that most truly noble of the human race, who is so grandly content with poverty for the sake of truth, manifesting such admirable self-respect for the good of others; although, if he chose to become moody and sanctified, he might at once realise a large fortune, and touch the pinnacle of the highest (so-called) dignities of the realm. As this letter is additional evidence of the thoroughness with which I have made my will, and my determination to leave what I may be possessed of to one not within the pale, or pail (slop-pail) of “Holy Mother (rather grumpy Grandmother) Church,” at whose hands I have received so much persecution, merely for claiming a right to tell the truth, and refusing to tell a lie by saying I believed what I felt convinced to be the most egregious balderdash and fudge, and to swallow that which is the fittest possible preparation for a lunatic. As this letter is evidence of the reality of my will, which I made myself, no one having been near me at the time, it will be no harm if you take care of it. I shall take my will and leave it at Mr Bradlaugh’s house to-day, and I intend soon to write him to the same effect as I have now written to you. But I must close, having a good deal to do to-day, and wishing you an ever-increasing success in spreading your true gospel for the salvation of common sense.—

I am, yours truly,

H. TURBERVILLE.

“‘ Mr W. Ramsey.

“‘*P.S.*—I have made several wills before, but never one that gave me a thousandth part the satisfaction this does, with which I am entirely satisfied, unless it may be that I have given away too much in legacies; but they do not amount to more than a twentieth part of the value of the whole, or not much more, at any rate.”

The postscript is rather significant, and, probably, had Mr Turberville lived a little longer, he would have

amused himself still more by creating fresh legatees, or adding new codicils, depriving Mr Bradlaugh of his expectant £16,000. The inevitable probate suit took place. There the next-of-kin and other legatees were handicapped by the unrivalled powers of litigation possessed by the great Atheistic beneficiary. When it came before the Probate Court, there was a probability of years of litigation. A compromise was arrived at, the details of which are reproduced here from an article which appeared in Mr Bradlaugh's journal. The article was headed, "The Turberville Case."

"Many friends in the country will be interested in knowing that, by the decision in the Turberville Will Case, which is now finally decided by agreement, the sum of £2500 is to be paid to Mr Charles Bradlaugh, in four months from this date. Although this will not put Mr Bradlaugh entirely out of debt, it will relieve him of liabilities to that amount, and give him fair hope that he may soon be entirely free from the pecuniary burdens against which he has been struggling for several years.

"Mr Turberville died on the 17th of August 1875, at Yeovil, Somersetshire, and our readers will remember that an inquest was held at Yeovil. The *Times* of Thursday, August 3d, contains the following report :—

"Henry Turberville, otherwise Henry Johns Blackmore, the deceased in the cause, formerly of Pilton, near Barnstaple, in the county of Devon, but late of Yeovil, in the county of Somerset, died at Yeovil on the 17th of August 1875, possessed of real and personal property of about £20,000. He was never married, and he left surviving him his brother, and sole next-of-kin, Mr Richard Doddridge Blackmore, well known as a novelist. He made several wills, among others one in 1858, in which he named Mr Essery an executor ; one in April 1875, substantially in favour of Mr Charles Bradlaugh, whom he appointed sole executor ; and a third and last, dated July 21st, 1875, in favour of the plaintiff, Mr Thomas Charles Maggs, and his family. Mr Maggs, who is a chemist at Yeovil, was also

named sole executor. Each of these gentlemen propounded the respective will of which he was executor, and filed pleas in opposition to those set up by the others, while Mr Richard Doddridge Blackmore contested the validity of all three instruments, and asked the Court to pronounce for an Intestacy. On the case being called, and before the jury were sworn, a conference occurred between the several counsel and parties in the cause, and resulted in a compromise.

“ ‘Mr Hawkins, in intimating the fact to the Court, said that if the case had gone on it would have occupied a great number of days, —possibly the remainder of the present and the whole of next week. An arrangement had been happily effected between the parties, and it was agreed that all litigation which had arisen out of the matter should terminate with the suit, and the will of the 21st of July 1875 should be proved in solemn form.

“ ‘Mr Serjeant Ballantine observed that this arrangement was a satisfactory conclusion of the case, affecting, as it appeared to him on the whole to do, a fair division of the property between the parties, but by it, no less than six other actions were settled.’ ”

The will of July 1875 having been proved in solemn form, the Court pronounced for it, and allowed the terms of arrangement, which did not transpire, to be filed. The following were the formal terms, as filed in Court on the verdict:—

“ WESTMINSTER HALL,
2d August 1876.

“ Maggs v. Blackmore.

“ All opposition withdrawn, plaintiff to have probate of the will propounded, without costs on either side, and to pay, within four months of probate, the following sums:—£2000 to Mr Blackmore, £2750 to Mr Bradlaugh (this includes £250 costs to Messrs Lewis & Lewis), £300 to Mr Essery. And thereupon Mr Blackmore, Mr Bradlaugh, and Mr Essery will release all claims upon the testator's estate. All actions in relation to the matters in dispute to be withdrawn.

“ THOS. C. MAGGS.

“ RICD. D. BLACKMORE.

“ C. BRADLAUGH.

“ R. A. BAYFORD, *for* Mr ESSERY.

"This agreement to be made a rule of the High Court of Justice, if either party so desires.

"H. H. *for Plaintiff.*

"S. S. *for Defendant Blackmore.*

"C. BRADLAUGH,

"R. A. BAYFORD."

In the Headingley biography this subject is referred to (page 166) in the edition printed after Remington & Co. refused to permit their name to appear as publishers, in the following words:—

"It was only after this inheritance that Bradlaugh left his modest lodgings in the East End. With his two amiable and highly-accomplished daughters, whom, as Mr Morrison Davidson says, in his essay on 'Eminent Radicals,' to know is to respect, he took up his abode at St John's Wood, within an easy walk of the house where Mrs Besant was then residing. Bradlaugh's little family was in mourning for Mrs Bradlaugh, who died after a prolonged illness, and his daughters, having nursed their mother devotedly, thenceforward made their home with their father."

In the first edition of the biographical advertisement, no reference is made to Mrs Bradlaugh, who died at Midhurst, after having lived separate from her husband for some years; and it is said her husband would not allow his daughters to reside with their mother, who, from poignant grief at being neglected, if not supplanted, in the house of her husband, sought seclusion in the country, where she watched and contemplated upon the tactics of her husband, at the expense of adopting habits

which, it is believed, tended to shorten her days. Far be it from me to lift the veil from domestic life, but scant reference has been given by Mr Bradlaugh as to his wife; and doubtless, if the truth were known, she had reason to regret the introduction of Neo-Malthusian doctrines into her own home. It did not contribute to her happiness; and if her memory were to be vindicated by those who could trace the life of a happy servant girl, fresh from her housemaid situation in Canonbury Square, and the time when she occupied her humble home at Hackney, and, later on, when she did her husband good service by entertaining and inviting friends for him at Elysium Villa, Tottenham, when he was dependent upon their support, it would be seen that Mr Bradlaugh owed much to a wife who, in her latter days, was quietly ignored. Possibly the day will come when the story of Mr Bradlaugh's matrimonial life, legal and conventional, may be written without wounding the feelings of his children, as undoubtedly the next generation will be curious to know the practical effect of certain doctrines, as evinced in the family of their great advocate.

CHAPTER XVII.

His Connection with "The Elements of Social Science"—What the Book teaches—Its Publisher—Mr Bradlaugh becomes the Paid Apostle of "The Elements"—Receives Large Sums of Money for Advertising Licentiousness—Incalculable Damage to Morality through His Teachings—How His Teachings affected His Wife—The Reason why He occupied an ostentatiously Cheap Lodging—A Few Extracts from the Bible of the Brothel, the Bradlaughite Text-book—Do Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant practise what They preach?—No more Marriages—Free Sexual Licence—Earned, probably, £10,000 by teaching Obscenity, yet always pleading Poverty—What Dr Agate says about "The Elements"—Joseph Barker's Opinion of Mr Bradlaugh's Teachings, etc.

MR BRADLAUGH has made the Population Question a plank of his Atheistic platform, and his name cannot be dissevered from the terrible orgies which the advocacy of Neo-Malthusianism has brought in its train. It is no business of ours whether or not, *personally* and *practically*, any scandal has attached to Mr Bradlaugh's name by his academic connection with vices which are abhorrent to every undebauched mind. The Epistles of St Paul reveal through a curtain the stain which links the classic Greek to the satyrs who caused the destruction of the Cities of the Plain. It has always been considered that boys who have read the history of the Ancients in the dead languages have become acquainted with a state of morals from which we shrink with horror, and many who are conversant with Latin authors consider the

pleasure dearly purchased by the filthy obscenity which is thereby instilled into the minds of youth. Were it not for such unexpurgated works, we might have looked for the time when those vices would have been extinct by non-user, but the discussion of certain abnormal crimes, lessens the repugnance which otherwise would be felt towards them. In like manner, the connection of Mr Bradlaugh with the notorious "Elements" has produced a virus of sexual degradation which has permeated the very heart of modern life. This book teaches a moral pollution, and no woman can follow its teachings without becoming a prostitute, even if she refuse to sell her person for money. Mr Bradlaugh achieved his success in life as the paid missionary for introducing its philosophy to the notice of the masses who have adopted its teachings. "The Elements" is a treatise which defends prostitution as a necessity, and erects prostitutes into public benefactresses. It deprecates the scorn which Englishmen have always shown for those who were addicted to crimes without a name. It elevates seduction into a necessary function, to which the only objection is pregnancy; and the whole is written with a view of explaining how, physiologically, Nature can be checked by mechanical Art. Its author is unknown, but Dr Charles Drysdale has shown every desire to be its foster-parent. He has stood sponsor for its morals. He has appeared before the magistrates to certify to the medical character of a like work, and his life appears to be devoted to spreading the

opinions of Neo-Malthusianism, in every newspaper to which he can gain entrance to advocate his specific, that poverty can be extirpated only by the Herodian principle of murdering infants. As much mystery is attached to the authorship as, a generation and a half ago, was attached to the "Vestiges of Creation." But Dr Chambers was a Scotchman who did not care to provoke the rage of priestly Presbyterianism, while Dr Drysdale apparently courts notoriety. Whether the "G. R." of the *National Reformer* is Dr Charles Drysdale of the *Echo*, is not as yet disclosed. He takes, by inference, the praise offered up to him as author of this Bible of the Brothel, and until he repudiates its authorship, wholly or in part, a censorious public will persist in attributing the production of the most demoralising book of the century to his agency, if not to his pen.

"The Elements" was published by Mr Edward Truelove, about the time that Mr Bradlaugh commenced to lecture, after his mother had purchased his discharge from the army. Mr Bradlaugh was a frequenter of the second-hand book shop of Mr Truelove, then situated in the shadow of Temple Bar, where the Law Courts now stand. The author appears to have dreaded its appearance in Wych or Holywell Streets—its proper habitats—and had commissioned Mr Truelove to be its vendor. Mr Truelove was at that time a middle-aged man of strong Radical prejudices against all that savoured of respectability in politics, orthodoxy in theology, and decency in morals. His face pointed him out as a credulous

enthusiast, who could be used as a tool to foist a new work on the section to which he belonged. Mr Truelove was by no means a man with a vicious tendency. He was too stupid for that. He was conscientious in his way, and a rich patron, who placed his name as publisher on a book which was likely to have a big sale, made him shut his eyes as to the class of work to which "The Elements" belonged. Mr Truelove placed the Bible of the Brothel before "Iconoclast," who was then very ambitious and very poor. As I have said elsewhere, the predecessor of "Iconoclast"—"Anthony Collins"—had given it a favourable notice in the *Investigator*, because he had seen only the Malthusian part in the "proof-sheets" sent to him by Mr Truelove prior to, its publication. A few months elapsed, and Mr Truelove began to find a Pactolian shower of gold from Dr Drysdale's anonymous work; and, besides the profits of publication, he received constant donations from his medico-philosophic benefactor. "Iconoclast" determined to rush in for his share of the good things which were dispensed to those who circulated "The Elements;" and at this epoch "Iconoclast" was earning sundry half-sovereigns by selling his tongue to help such financial adventurers as Mr Albert Grant, who frequently required noisy orators to attend the meetings of shareholders, and, as a budding promoter of "Limited Companies," "Iconoclast" was always on the look-out for anything which would pay. Whether he offered his services, or the offer was made to him by the Drys-

daleites, is unknown, but the fact was patent to all, that as soon as "Iconoclast" took up this subject, he found the financial patron who has ever since protected him. Just in proportion as he gave his time to the advocacy of the Population Question, so did the donations roll in. From a modest sovereign, the amount grew to £5. It advanced to £10, which amount was frequently repeated. It rapidly increased to larger sums, which, I understand, have been no less than £100, and that on more than one occasion. With those stimulants to activity, "Iconoclast" divided his attention between the practice of Law, the demolition of Theology, and the advocacy of Malthusianism, until he abandoned the first as a profession, on account of the liberal douceurs he received from his patron.

It was not the desire of personal moral pollution which actuated Mr Bradlaugh at the earlier stage of his connection with the "Elements," for, as a young man, he was believed to be singularly free from licentious habits. But his necessities impelled him to take the side which produced the most ready money, and the whole of this part of his career demonstrated that he undertook the task of agitating the Population Question as the paid hack of "The Elements." In this capacity, no one can estimate the injury he has done to the national morals. Vices which once entailed infamy are now considered, by the disciples of Mr Bradlaugh, to be an evidence of correct breeding and good manners. If the theory of geo-

metrical progression be correct as representing the increase of population, it is equally correct as to the progress of immorality. Whenever these principles are carried into practice, the chastity of men and the purity of women are at an end. When the *National Reformer* was projected, the editorship was divided between Joseph Barker and "Iconoclast." In a few weeks, Mr Barker openly protested against the immorality taught by his colleague. He denounced it as the revival of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was evident in the lives of the leading Secularists. Mr Bradlaugh's principal supporter in Sheffield was a Mr D——h, a man who, as a Free-thinker, had, before his acquaintance with "Iconoclast," led an irreproachable domestic life, until the doctrine of "The Elements" was taught at the "Hall of Science," Rockingham Street, in that town. The contagion spread as the supplementary pamphlets on Malthusianism by "G. R." were distributed, and, in the case of Mr. D., ended in dethroning his wife, because she was old, and in installing a young woman in her place. In ordinary cases, the wife would have been turned out, but to have done so would have been contrary to the humanity of the Secularists who adopted the new creed, the female members of which were taught the Mormon doctrine that elderly ladies who had lost their charms were to provide their lords with more attractive successors, with whom they were to live in peace, *in the same house*. This was no solitary case. Just in proportion to the success of

the mission of "Iconoclast," the happiness of once happy Secular homes became for ever blasted and destroyed. I do not say that Mr Bradlaugh designed such crimes. They were only the natural effects of his teachings, and even in the sanctuary of his own home, the moral retribution did not fail to appear. The earlier years of Mr Bradlaugh's married life were not reputed to have been unhappy, and I shall not here seek to recall the memories of a home where husband and wife found mutual cohabitation impossible. Before the advent of Mrs Besant, there was the French lady, "the Countess," who beguiled the tedium of expatriation from Paris, by accompanying Mr Bradlaugh on his tours, ostensibly to elicit sympathy with the French Republic. This "friendship" was viewed with scant satisfaction by the *wives* of the Freethinkers, who had not had their moral sense debauched by reading "The Elements," and it was perhaps a convenient reason to allege economy as the cause of *de jure* Mrs Bradlaugh living separate from her spouse, who occupied an ostentatiously cheap lodging in Turner Street, at a rental of *three shillings and sixpence per week*, at the time he alleged his income exceeded £1000 per annum. In this three-and-sixpenny lodging he would be free from the visits of his ardent admirers, who became too intimately curious as to his life, when they made their London excursions. At all events, as Mr Bradlaugh became the bribed advocate of the new Sexual Religion, he secluded himself as much as pos-

sible from the gaze of the Secularists. He no longer accepted the humble hospitality of his disciples, but patronised the best hotels and gave himself airs which shocked his admirers. He never in so many words preached the Gospel of the Brothel from its authorised scriptures. Had he, or any such advocate, done so, he would have stood a fair chance of martyrdom; for even the pollution of such works has not yet reduced English women, however abandoned, to a state which allows them openly to applaud vice. The most degraded prostitutes have some respect for a decent life, although such weakness strikes at the root of the doctrine of the Neo-Malthusian creed, as taught by those who pulled the pecuniary purse-strings, which set loose the venal oratory of Mr Bradlaugh.

The agitation was apparently based upon the Population Question. When the orator had demonstrated that there were too many babies born, the natural inference of his unspoken thought was, how to reduce the supply. The originator of the theory had a simple method, which consisted in delaying marriage for ten years. This prescription of the Rev. Mr Malthus was laughed at, and the Drysdale treatise was referred to as the Delphian oracle which should prescribe an unerring remedy. Modern Christianity (which is essentially Humanity) had exalted self-denying chastity. Neo-Malthusianism brazenly asserted that chastity was a crime against the animal system. The cardinal point in the new sexual religion was that Nature directed that

as soon as puberty appeared in either sex, the intimate relationship of the sexes should commence, irrespective of age, marriage, or consequence. The book states that—
 “Every man who has not a due amount of sexual exercise lives a life of natural imperfection and sin,”
 and that—

“*The commonly-received code of sexual morality is most erroneous, and erected in ignorance of, and opposition to, natural truth ; the real natural duties of every human being (however social difficulties may interfere with the discharge of them) towards his reproductive organs, and the passions connected with them, consisting in their due and normal exercise, for which the social provision of marriage is quite inadequate. Nature lays one command on us : ‘Exercise all thy functions, else art thou an imperfect and sinful being.’*”

Again, the new Gospel says :—

“It is absolutely certain that Nature meant the sexual organs in either sex to have a due amount of exercise, from the time of their maturity till their decline ; and no one who knows anything about the bodily laws can doubt that every departure from the course she points out is a natural sin.”

It will surprise my readers to learn the new doctrine as to female purity. It is the keystone of Mr Bradlaugh’s morals, and this is how it is described by the High Priest of Neo-Malthusianism :—

“Chastity is considered one of the greatest of all virtues in woman, and in man too, though in his case it is practically less regarded. We have no longer voluntary nuns, but of involuntary ones there are myriads—far more, in reality, than ever existed in any Roman Catholic country. Millions of women pass a great part of their sexual lives, and immense numbers pass the whole, in total sexual abstinence, without any of the enjoyments of sexual pleasures or the happiness of a mother’s affections. For all this incredible self-denial, which causes more anguish and disease than any mind can conceive, they have for their reward *the barren praise of chastity.*” . . .

“Chastity, or complete sexual abstinence, so far from being a virtue, is invariably a *great natural sin*.”

. . . “Nature cares not for our moral code ; marriage has nothing sacred in her eyes ; *with* or *without* marriage, she gives her seal of approbation to the sexually virtuous man or woman in a healthy and vigorous state of the sexual organs and appetites, while she punishes the erring by physical and moral sufferings.”

Speaking of the exercise of the reproductive organs, the author says :—

“Every one will perceive that he is *morally bound* to exercise duly his sexual organs throughout the period of sexual life. Thus the young man, on entering upon puberty, will feel that Nature commands him to indulge, to a moderate extent, his sexual desires ; and when once he is fully convinced of the natural rectitude of this, he cannot fail to perceive the insufficiency and unnatural character of our moral code.”

According to this theory, the Bradlaughian code of morals teaches that as soon as a young man attains the age of virility he must indulge in what Christians call vice, but which Mr Bradlaugh's school designates virtue. But the same law is said to affect women as well ; so that, independent of marriage, every girl of sixteen would be no longer a virgin. The universal morality of the most savage tribes, from the dawn of history, has revolted at such an idea, and the brightest links in the golden chain which connects, directly or indirectly, all the religions which have ever existed in the world, have been the sacredness of the vestal virgin, and the hallowed trust in nuptial faith. But this, to Mr Bradlaugh, and his coadjutrix, Mrs Besant, is a delusion which the new morality will soon show to be the relics of an effete creed. The Neo-Malthusians, who have abolished chastity, have

condescended to inaugurate a new ideal of marriage, as part of their system of "Sexual Religion." This is taught by Mr Bradlaugh, as one of the leaders of the Malthusian League, an institution which is graced by the effective patronage of Mrs Besant; and it would be a gross injustice to suppose that either of those illustrious advocates would speak on such serious matters, unless they were prepared to substantiate their arguments from personal observation, if not from personal experience. The author of the system having decided that marriage, as a state of permanent cohabitation, is a mistake, as there is a great disproportion between the sexes, proposes to utilise all unattached (that is unmarried) females by making prostitutes of the rest, after elevating their status and removing the stigma which at present attaches to a *fille du pavé*, he says,—

"Many of the sexual evils most widely spread among us depend directly upon the errors of our code of sexual morality. According to this code, all love except married love is considered sinful. Marriage, it is held, moreover, should bind people together for life, without leaving them the power of indulging in any other sexual intimacy, or of divorce from each other, unless either the husband or wife commits adultery. If this, which is the view of marriage generally entertained in this country, were to continue, there are very many fearful sexual evils which could not be removed. In the first place, what is, or should be, the grand object of any social institution for uniting the sexes? It is, that *each individual in society, every man and woman, should have a fair share of the blessings of love and of offspring, and that the children should be duly provided for.* But if marriage be the only honourable way of obtaining sexual and parental pleasures, very many must be excluded from them; for, even supposing that there were room for the exercise of all the reproductive powers, as in America, or that, by preventive intercourse, the propor-

tion of children in each family were to be small, so as to allow of a great many marriages, still there would be a large number of women, and even of men, who, from plainness and other unattractive qualities, would find no one who would be willing to be rigidly bound to them for life.

"The irrevocable nature of the marriage contract, and the impossibility of procuring divorce, lead to the most fearful evils. Mr Hill shows this in his work on 'Crime,' telling us that the great majority of murders and brutal assaults now-a-days are committed by husbands upon their wives, and showing that it is in the nature of all long and indissoluble contracts to cause similar evils. All contracts binding two human beings together in an indissoluble manner for long periods are the fruitful source of crimes and miseries . . . The custom, moreover, of selecting one sole object of love, steeling one's heart, as far as sexual desires are concerned, against all the rest of man or womankind, has a very narrowing effect on our capacity for affection and appreciation of what is good and amiable in the different characters we see around us. Hence, in great measure, has arisen that *fastidiousness* in love which is so marked among us, and is the sign of a narrow and effeminate culture.

"The great *natural sexual duties* of man and woman do not, as is commonly imagined, consist in being a constant husband or wife, or in avoiding unmarried intercourse, but are of a very different nature. It is of the highest importance that the attention of all of us should be steadfastly concentrated upon the real sexual duties, and not dazzled by mere names. *Marriage diverts our attention from the real sexual duties*, and this is one of its worst effects.

"Every individual man or woman is bound to exercise duly his sexual organs, so that the integrity of his own health shall not be impaired on the one hand, and so that he shall not, on the other, interfere with the health and happiness of his neighbour. Every individual should make it his conscientious aim that he or she should have a sufficiency of love to satisfy the sexual demands of his nature, and that others around him should have the same. It is impossible, as has been shown before, that each individual should have this in an old country, unless by the use of preventive means. The use of these means, therefore, comes to be *incumbent* upon all those who seek to enjoy the natural pleasures of love themselves, without depriving their neighbours of them.

"It is *absolutely impossible* to have a free, sincere, and dignified

sexual morality in our society as long as marriage continues to be the only honourable provision for the union of the sexes, and as long as the marriage bond is so indissoluble as at present. . . . It is only by relaxing the rigour of the marriage bond, and allowing greater sexual freedom, that it is possible to eradicate prostitution, and with it venereal disease.

“Now, in reality, *facility of divorce does away with marriage*; it thoroughly alters the theory of the institution, and makes it in reality nothing more than an agreement between two people to live together as man and wife, so long as they love each other. And such is the only true mode of sexual union; it is the one which Nature points out to us; and we may be certain that any institution which defies the natural laws of love, as marriage does, will be found to be the cause of immense evils; ever accumulating as the world rolls on, and mankind become more free and more enlightened in the physical and moral laws of their being. . . . Let those who will marry; but those who do not wish to enter upon so indissoluble a contract, either on account of their early age, or from a disapproval of the whole ceremony, should deem it perfectly honourable and justifiable to form a temporary connection.

“As I have already endeavoured to show, the present system of prostitution and indissoluble marriage (which are closely connected together) might be, or ought to be, superseded by preventive intercourse, and by a relaxation of the marriage code, when the diseases of abstinence and abuse might not only be satisfactorily treated, but effectually prevented.

“The noblest sexual conduct, in the present state of society, appears to me to be that of those who, while endeavouring to fulfil the *real* sexual duties, enumerated in a former essay, live together openly and without disguise, but refuse to enter into an indissoluble contract of which they conscientiously disapprove.”

In the time of Robert Owen, the whole scheme of Socialism was wrecked by a widespread suspicion that Socialism meant a loosening of the marriage tie. This great organisation tumbled to pieces because it was erroneously thought to be incompatible with conjugal permanency, although Robert Owen desired no greater

alteration in our marriage system than a civil union and a civil dissolution of the marriage tie in the case of marital incontinence. Both objects were obtained when marriages were legalised at the Registrar's office, and when the Divorce Court was established. How different, then, must be the decline of social virtue when Mr Bradlaugh's Gospel says:—

“Morality, medicine, religion, law, politics, are solemn farces played before the eyes of men, whose imposing pomps and dazzling ceremonies serve but to divert the attention from the awful tragedies behind the scenes.”

Speaking of *maiden* ladies who try to reform prostitutes, he alleges their life is quite as sinful as that of the prostitute they endeavour to convert. He says of prostitution that—

“It should be regarded as a valuable temporary substitute for a better state of things. It is greatly preferable to no sexual intercourse at all, without which, as has been shown, every man and woman must lead a most unnatural life. Therefore, the deep gratitude of mankind, instead of their scorn, is due, and will be given in future times, to those unfortunate females who have suffered in the cause of our sexual nature.”

Speaking of *young women*, Mr Bradlaugh's Gospel says:—

“Chastity or sexual abstinence causes more real disease and misery in one year, I believe, in this country, than sexual excesses in a century.”

Speaking of female diseases, he says:—

“The crippling idea of chastity and female decorum binds her like an invisible chain, wherever she moves, and prevents her from daring to think, feel, or act, freely and impulsively. . . . If we examine into the origin and meaning of these singular ideas with

regard to woman, we shall find that they are based upon no natural distinction between the two sexes, but upon the erroneous views of man, and especially upon the mistaken ideas as to the virtue of female *chastity*. It is to guard this supposed virtue that all the restrictions on female liberty and female development in body and mind have arisen. . . . Society is itself to blame for all such errors as unnatural sexual indulgences in either sex. Until we can supply to the violent sexual passions of youth a proper and natural gratification, we may be absolutely certain that an unnatural one will be very frequently resorted to. . . . The only true and permanent remedy, is a proper amount of sexual exercise."

I cannot quote further from this remarkably putrid book with which Mr Bradlaugh's name is indissolubly connected, but the substance, and the point to be derived from its perusal, is that sexual licence should be erected into a new Moral Law, displacing that which has hitherto existed in Europe. While Mr Bradlaugh has advocated those doctrines, he has always professed to connect them with the Law of Population, as exemplified in the work of Malthus. Even Mr Bradlaugh, with all his boldness, has shrunk from openly stating the conclusions of his master. If he has declaimed against the increase of population, as affecting wages and food, he has hesitated to tell his audiences how to avoid the natural result of the cohabitation of the sexes. This, however, has been an act of prudence on his part, and Mr Bradlaugh has always been a shrewd tactician where his purse was concerned. Obscene books have always fetched a comparatively heavy price. The "Every Woman's Book" of Richard Carlile was sold at a shilling, while other similar works realised only a penny per copy. In his lectures Mr Bradlaugh referred to the *Books* for "further

particulars," and he invariably took a supply to sell at his lectures. He became rich by selling obscenity. From the time when Mr Bradlaugh first undertook the popularisation of "The Elements," he must, by donations, lectures, and profits from the literature sold by or for him, have accumulated at least £10,000, and he has the while diverted his audiences by preaching poverty and ostentatiously dreading bankruptcy.

Dr AGATE, in his "*SEXUAL ECONOMY as taught by CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.*," sums up the objections to the Drysdaleian-Bradlaugh morality thus:—

"It is time that we consider what is involved in these Palæo-Secularist doctrines, and what would be the condition of human society if they were universally adopted and carried out in practice. Either boys and girls, as soon as they arrived at the age of puberty, say from fifteen to seventeen years, would marry, or would engage in sexual amours without marriage. If the rule were marriage, it would necessitate polygamy in old countries where there is a surplus of women, and polyandry where there is a surplus of men. Virginity in either sex is denounced as a state of mortal sin, dangerous to health and life. For the married, some provision must be made for husbands during the periods of maternal disablement, necessary absence, or the illness of either wife or husband; and there could be permitted only very brief widowhood.

"Palæo-Secularists stipulate for free and easy divorce, and that means simply a system of concubinage such as now exists to some extent, and is not considered of sufficient importance for legal registration. If the physiological doctrines of 'The Elements' are true, special arrangements should be made for the army, navy, and all sea-going vessels. Women should be enlisted in all the services as well as men. Prostitution, as we have seen, though degrading, is honourable; but, if all women would adopt these principles, there would be no need of a particular class, because all women would be virtually prostitutes, and the now necessary and useful profession would be abolished. Seduction would be neither actionable nor

immoral—in fact, as soon as all women are converted to Palæo-Secularism, it would cease to exist. As common hospitality and common humanity would forbid men and women to deny to others any necessary of life, there could no longer be any jealousy, or miserably selfish suits in the Divorce Court about adultery. With free divorce the court could be abolished, and marriage itself, in its legal form, must quickly disappear. All poems, novels, tragedies, and comedies, based upon past or present ideas of virtue, chastity, fidelity, and what have been considered manly and womanly virtues, would be obsolete, and read only as antique curiosities. We should have a practical Palæo-Secular world, satisfying its animal propensities, and using artificial means to prevent having too many children.

“Men and women of England, this is the picture of the society of the future set before you by the Palæo-Secularist leaders and the author of ‘The Elements of Social Science.’ These are the lessons taught to the young men and young women in the halls of science, advocated in newspapers and pamphlets, and studied in Secular reading-rooms.

“Look at these doctrines :—

“Chastity is a crime.

“Unbridled sensuality is virtue.

“The Law of Nature commands the constant exercise of the procreative function.

“The Law of Population forbids that this act should be allowed to produce its natural result in the production of offspring.

“There have been Atheists who worship Nature ; but the Secular Malthusians hold her in small reverence. They mend her blunders with their superior wisdom. Nature has united pleasure with the function which continues the life of the race. They seek to enjoy the pleasure and prevent the object for which the function was made. This is the outcome of development by natural selection. There must be, however, some old-fashioned people in the world, to whom these results of ‘science, falsely so-called,’ are what the Bible has characterised them, in three words :—EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH.”

It may be considered that Mr Bradlaugh is better than his creed. Perhaps he might hesitate to make a speech in Parliament in support of the morality he has,

during thirty years, enunciated in the press and on the platform. It cannot be said that Mr Bradlaugh represents the Secular party on this subject. It has divided, if not annihilated, the party, by the protests it has occasioned. It was the cause of the withdrawal of Mr Joseph Barker from the joint editorship of the *National Reformer*. His review of "The Elements" is worthy of notice, as he was a prominent Freethinker who felt so disgusted at its influence that he ultimately relapsed into his original faith. He said, "I regard a man who can recommend a book like the miscalled "Elements of Social Science" to unsuspecting boys and girls, and who can form or patronise associations for the purpose of stealthily spreading its most deadly poison through the community, as a more dangerous man, as a greater criminal, as a deadlier foe to virtue and humanity, than the vilest murderer that ever plotted or sinned against mankind. My duty to myself, my duty to my wife and children, my duty to my readers and friends, and my duty to the public, require me, and my own heart prompts me, to separate from such men entirely and for ever, and to wage an unceasing and unsparing war against their principles."

Mr Bradlaugh has, at different times, sought to bring forward great names in support of his interested advocacy of this book, and he has quoted from Lord Amberley and John Stuart Mill in its praise. Those two dead men repudiated the imputation of sympathising with it. Still Mr Bradlaugh persevered, and at last got into Parliament, to assist in moulding laws in

support of his theory that every young woman should indulge in unlawful love, and that every young man should forsake the church for the brothel, in order to exercise the functions of his nature. This is the creed of the Sexual Religion; and I shall now show how Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant propagated this scientific theory of their new Gospel, in the "Fruits of Philosophy," by which they polluted society, and gained over £4000 in a few months, by selling some 200,000 copies of an obscene publication.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Disruption in the Atheistic Ranks—Mr Holyoake's Freethought Connection—Mr Bradlaugh's Cruel Treatment of Mr Charles Watts—Utterly Ungrateful and Exceedingly Mean—James Watson's Publications—Conviction of Cook—The Atheistic Trinity—Prosecution against Mr Charles Watts—Mr Watts persecuted by Mr Bradlaugh on His refusing to publish Obscenity—Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant become the Publishers of Obscene Literature—Realising £15,000 thereby.

AT the close of the year 1876, the crisis occurred in the ranks of the Secular party which produced a disruption, causing a secession of their right wing. This section had reluctantly considered that their doctrines of scientific evolution should be sufficiently liberal to allow them to give a tone to the aggressive champions who in their brusque way were engaged in a historic conflict with Christianity. The right wing was composed of men of scientific and logical habits of thought, whose intellectual training had led them into the same belief as the Roman Pro-consul Gallio, in the days of Paul, that the quarrels of the sects were merely over "words" and not "things." They had considerable doubts as to the wisdom of mixing with sectaries whose utmost range of action was limited to tearing to pieces controversial texts; yet, through the influence of educated Freethinkers, who did not derive a

livelihood from polemics of such a kind, there had been a large accession of thinkers who gave an academic countenance even to the angry debates of the "Hall of Science." Although no active personal service announced that such men as John Stuart Mill, Professors Tyndall and Huxley, and the giant intellect of Charles Darwin sympathised with those who rejected the views of Christianity as a divinely-inspired religion, still the knowledge that representative men of this class held those views, assisted to elevate the position of the merely destructive critics whose chief happiness was derived from exposing the scientific shortcomings of Moses in the Pentateuch. Mr George Jacob Holyoake who, for many years previous to the advent of Mr Bradlaugh, had led the Freethought party—if not heroically, at least decently—had done his best to bring the moral support of eminent publicists to his cause. The mistake made by Mr Holyoake was in his trying to form a church out of a scattered congregation which could never meet in one place. Had he styled himself the Rev. G. J. Holyoake, and had he preached in South Place Chapel, as the Rev. W. J. Fox, M.P., and Moncure D. Conway had done, he would have collected together a body of Secularist adherents, who, by their staid respectability, would have merited episcopal recognition, without forfeiting their right to call themselves Free-thinkers; for such peculiarities would have been discreetly kept in the background, where all were agreed on one opinion as to scriptural doctrine, as in so many

fashionable churches, where the clergy hold their latitudinarian views as a kind of secret trust, not to be openly displayed to the public. Mr Holyoake gathered a *clientèle* around him which gave prestige to Free-thought, without compromising his friends. It was through his influence that men of position lent their countenance to a hitherto despised cult. Mr Bradlaugh, when he assumed the Leadership of his party, had the moral support of this section of the leaders of opinion who were attached to liberal thought, although they would have shrunk from personal contact with its platform representative, who, having dethroned all his competitors, gave himself the airs of a modern Jupiter, at whose angry nod all who disputed his authority were instantly and imperiously ostracised. Like Lucifer, Mr Bradlaugh preferred to rule in hell rather than serve in heaven; and although in his reign of less than twenty years innumerable victims to the Atheistic Moloch had been sacrificed to satisfy the egotism of "the chief," there was one man who, like Abdiel, was faithful amongst the faithless, and who served his master with a devotion which should have procured him honour in the Walhalla of the "Hall of Science." Mr Charles Watts was the male *alter ego* of Mr Bradlaugh. Until the incarnation of Mrs Besant, he had been the instrument by which the edicts of the Freethought sultan were announced to the world. If any humble Secularist wished a personal introduction to the great man, he made his salaams to Mr Charles Watts. He was at

once his Prime Minister, his Glorifier, his Apologist, his Printer, his Sub-Editor, his Publisher, and his Slave. Yet, after years of service, he was ignominiously ejected from the Atheistic Presence, because he declined to go to gaol, in order that Mr Charles Bradlaugh and his business partner might put £5000 *in their pockets* from the sale of a book which a succession of magistrates and judges and juries have since declared to be filthy, demoralising, and obscene. It seemed a curious ending to the friendship of the Atheistic Damon and Pythias. When the quarrel, heightened by a woman's bitterness, broke out, it did seem mean that the Infidel lecturer, whose income was over £1000 per annum, should pay his coadjutor the munificent sum of 10s. *per week* for sub-editing the *National Reformer*, and then taunt his victim with ingratitude in not being sufficiently thankful for this munificent income. He forgot that while he was in America a General Election broke out, and that Pythias had rushed off to Northampton to protect the interests of the Atheistic Damon, and keep alive the prestige, which has enabled him to become a member of the House of Commons. The story is a very curious one, and is soon told. In the hierarchy of Freethought, the trade of a pamphleteer has always been the backbone on which seditious oratory has relied for its support. Richard Carlile made far more money as a bookseller than he did as a lecturer. During many years he published a number of pamphlets, which were the groundwork of

sixty subsequent years' publishing ventures. Hetherington and Cleave added to the catalogue. When they departed from the scene of their conflicts with Vice Societies and Attorney-Generals, a Mr James Watson absorbed the bulk of the extreme political tracts which had been issued by the Infidel, Socialistic, and Chartist writers who had each felt it to be a solemn duty to write a pamphlet, by way of letting posterity know their opinions on the reforms necessary to re-organise society. At last, after Fergus O'Connor's fiasco of the 10th April 1848, James Watson grew dissatisfied with the apathy of London Radicals, and when the Crimean War broke out, there was such a change in the opinions of the people as to the want of utility in Radical agitation, that James Watson decided to shake the dust of London from off the soles of his feet, and migrate to Newcastle-on-Tyne, the then headquarters of the Foreign Affairs Committee of David Urquhart, which had won over one half of the Freethinking Societies into another line of thought.

James Watson had about one hundred pamphlets, which had but a small sale amongst extreme reformers. His catalogue containing the list was circulated amongst extreme people. Along with others, it included a work of a Dr Knowlton, an American physician, entitled "The Fruits of Philosophy," and another, by the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen, the founder of Socialism. These are the two books which, in 1877, came so prominently before the world, on account of

the series of prosecutions undertaken by the Crown, and the defences made by Mr Bradlaugh. At that date, they had been forty years before the public unchallenged. In 1855, Mr G. J. Holyoake was, like all Infidel lecturers, ambitious of having a bookshop of his own, but, with his fastidious and squeamish habits, he hesitated about becoming a mere bookseller, so he devised what he called an "Institution," and took a shop to sell liberal books, in Fleet Street, and the shop was also to be the headquarters of Secularism, and the *Reasoner*. It was mercilessly ridiculed by Robert Cooper, "Anthony Collins," and the writers in the London *Investigator*, as a pretentious name for an ordinary newsvendor's shop. The stock of pamphlets published by James Watson was transferred to the Fleet Street "Institution," and remained there till the "Institution" venture collapsed. Mr Watson's publications were then transferred to Mr Austin Holyoake, who continued to sell them till his death. When this event happened, the party was appealed to for funds to purchase the concern for Mr Charles Watts, and money was subscribed for this purpose. Mr Charles Watts had, at this time, been for over ten years the second Editor of the *National Reformer*. He was its printer, and also the publisher of those pamphlets which are identified with the names of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant. At this period (December 1876), a man named Cook, living in Bristol, known to the police as a dealer in obscene literature, was arrested on the charge

of selling publications which were undoubtedly of an immoral nature. Like most of his class, he kept books which verged on the border line of the law, and he produced them only to persons in whom he trusted. His stock was seized, and amongst it was found Dr Knowlton's "Fruits of Philosophy." Upon this discovery, he was brought before the magistrates. A defence was set up that the book had been supplied by Mr Charles Watts. This gentleman felt it his duty to go to Bristol and take the full responsibility of its issue. He gave evidence as to his belief that, viewed as a medical work, it was a moral book, and, on that account, its sales were justifiable. The magistrates of the Bristol Quarter Sessions held a different opinion to that of Mr Watts, and they convicted the vendor, who received a severe sentence. This seems to have opened the eyes of Mr Watts as to the risks he ran in publishing a work which might send him to prison, but even then, he does not appear to have seriously read the "Fruits of Philosophy," although, I am afraid, he would have found some difficulty in persuading an intelligent jury of the fact. When Mr Watts returned to town, he laid his doubts before Mrs Besant, and, in the published controversy which took place, the statements of the disputants were so contrary, that it is only an act of charity to refrain from dissecting the inaccuracies of the family quarrel.

Up to this time Charles Watts had been the third person in what was irreverently termed the Atheistic

Trinity. When the cause of Secularism was jubilant, photographs of Mr Bradlaugh, Mr Austin Holyoake, and Mr Charles Watts had been triumphantly labelled as "the Trinity." The Trinity in Unity existed unchallenged until the death of Austin Holyoake. Then the inevitable woman, who always introduces discord into masculine friendship, intervened in the person of Mrs Besant, who was soon accused of monopolising more than her legitimate share of the admiration of the central figure in the party. This remarkable friendship planted the seeds of dissension, which soon culminated in a rupture. Heloise became too powerful for Abelard, and difficulties arose, as Heloise had a husband and Abelard a wife. Mr Watts resented the co-optation of Mrs Besant as the second person in the Trinity (*vice* Austin Holyoake). A new idea had struck the imperious "Ajax," who changed her cognomen when she took the character of Juno in the Secular party. It was no sooner conceived than adopted by Jupiter, who felt horror-struck with indignation when his hitherto subservient sub-editor refused to immolate himself to carry out the scheme. The sensation caused by the Bristol prosecution had procured a sudden run on the "Fruits of Philosophy," and Mr Bradlaugh saw in it a mine of wealth. He wished to monopolise it for his own profit, and he thought that Mr Watts would be only too pleased to afford him the opportunity of entering into litigation where his name would appear prominently before the public. The occasion soon arrived. A criminal charge

was brought against Mr Watts as publisher of the "Fruits of Philosophy." He despairingly appealed to Mr Bradlaugh's legal knowledge, and begged to be informed whether the book was "indictable?" "Yes," replied Mr Bradlaugh; "and it must be defended." "Upon what grounds?" demanded the publisher of his "chief," and received for a reply that the "interests of Freethought" required it, and that it would be his (Mr Watt's) duty to be a victim, if one were required. Here the conflict of opinion began. Mr Lewis (of the eminent firm of Lewis & Lewis), the first criminal lawyer in England, who had been retained for the defence of Mr Watts, advised that the book was indefensible. Immediately upon publicity having been created by the Bristol prosecution, a demand for the work was made by the public, who had ignored its existence for forty years. Mr Bradlaugh's better feelings for his old friend were over-influenced by Mrs Besant, who evidently saw that a little fortune would ensue if the authorities were dragged into a conflict.

They determined to secure all the advantages of such a scheme, by throwing over the third person of the Trinity, and taking the game, and the profits, into their own hands. Mr Charles Watts had not shown sufficient deference to the lady whose powers of persuasion were irresistible to Mr Bradlaugh. He had been giving himself airs, and was suspected of an intention to offer himself as a parliamentary candidate; so it was necessary to abate his pretensions. He was ordered by his male and female colleagues to undergo the rite of martyrdom.

He refused. He had read the work, and had come to the conclusion that the adoption of scientific sterility was no part of the programme of Secularism; and there was no general principle at stake which demanded that he should go to gaol as a martyr, although he expressed his readiness to go there for Blasphemy or Sedition; and a considerable number of his friends supported him in his decision. He resolved to plead guilty, and undertake not to sell the book, upon an understanding that he should not be called up to receive judgment. He was committed for trial. In vain the strongest pressure was brought to bear upon him. Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant did their best to influence his judgment, or, as they said, to strengthen his courage. "Go to prison, Charlie, my boy," said Mr Bradlaugh, "and I'll look after Kate" (Mrs Watts). "Go to prison," said Mrs Besant, "and I'll collect funds to support your family. I am going to lecture next Sunday at Exeter, and will inaugurate the 'Defence Fund' at that city, where one of the authors of 'Essays and Reviews' is bishop." Possibly Mr Watts might have relented, and courted martyrdom, but when he was free from the overpowering personality of Mrs Besant, he was thrown into the presence of his own domestic protector, who infused into his mind sufficient resisting power to enable him to turn a deaf ear to the cut-and-dried whims of Mrs Besant. Mrs Watts could not see any reason why her husband should yield to the entreaties of Mrs Besant, and, as a Free-thinker's daughter, and a Freethinker's wife, she argued

that if the book were indefensible for general circulation, there was no reason why martyrdom should be courted for obscenity, and she ultimately prevailed upon her spouse to stand firm. Meanwhile, Mrs Besant had gone to Plymouth, and made an appeal to the Secularists, at the close of her lecture, for funds. She collected £8. On her return to town, she found that Mr Watts had withdrawn a tacit agreement "to fight the bigots." Again Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant had an interview with the intended victim. The "chief" adjured him, by all the ties which had formerly bound the indivisible Trinity together, to be firm. He grew affectionate. He styled him, "Charlie, my boy." But the two Charlies were inspired by rival petticoats, and the blandishments of "Ajax" failed to influence "Charlie, my boy," when he was relieved from the basilisk of her presence. Then came the *finale*. The first member of the Trinity excommunicated the third, with all the horrors of bell, book, and candle. He was summarily dismissed from his 10s. a week appointment, as unworthy to use "paste and scissors" in the *National Reformer*. His livelihood, which had been principally derived from printing this journal, and the works of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant, was summarily taken away from him. The lady member of the Trinity told him she could not think of permitting a "person" to print her pamphlets who would not go to prison in defence of the "Fruits of Philosophy," and she hastened to telegraph to her Exeter friends that she would return

them the money she had collected for his defence. The "chief" was inexorable. He ordered Mr Watts to make up his accounts, and, in the meantime, threatened that if he (Mr Watts) interfered with his (Mr Bradlaugh's) connection, he (Mr Watts) would be seriously and utterly ruined beyond redemption. Of course this Secular domestic squabble could not be kept quiet. The Filthites were deluded into the belief that the "Press was in danger," and they were called upon to support the right of free sale of unpopular publications, by providing money for the use of Mr Bradlaugh. The Atheistic tocsin was sounded, and every "Freethinker" who read the *National Reformer* felt it his duty to buckle on his harness and make those sacrifices which had been cheerfully borne by Carlile, Hetherington, Clive, and Holyoake. They did not stop to inquire as to the cause. They obeyed their leaders. There was not a sentence in the "Fruits of Philosophy" but which might have been written by an orthodox Christian. There was no ground whatever for calling upon Freethinkers to defend doctrines which related merely to physiology. With the devotion of fanatics the dupes thought they were doing a public service. But they were, as they well deserved, befooled and robbed for allowing themselves to be hoodwinked by such false pretences. At length the readers of Mr Bradlaugh's journal had to be informed of what was going on. "Personal Notes" appeared in his organ, which at first looked fair, but, soon afterwards, the public appealed for more facts than were to be gathered from the superficial "Personal

Notes." Mrs Watts, with more decision of character than her husband, published a *brochure*, and a large section of the most active Secularists took the part of Mr Watts. It is remarkable that while this controversy was proceeding, Mr Bradlaugh should have written, "If the prosecuted pamphlet had been brought to me for publication, I should probably not have published it;" and yet the Trinity was dissolved because the third person refused to go to gaol for circulating this work. The controversy ended by Mr Watts pleading guilty, and undertaking not to disseminate the pamphlet further. The breach was now complete. The vials of Atheistic wrath were opened and poured on the recreant soldier, who was denounced as having abandoned his flag and having sold the pass to the enemy.

Suddenly a new resolution was taken by Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant. Dazzled by the immense sale of, and consequent profits from, an obscene book, which professes to have been written on physiological lines for a philosophical purpose, they resolved to provoke a conflict which would be in itself a vast advertisement free of all monetary costs and thus establish themselves as publishers of questionable literature. From a shop in an obscure street, and, after an immense stock of this book had been printed, formal notice was given by Mr Bradlaugh, that, despite the decision of the Court, he and Mrs Besant would, in person, sell the "Fruits of Philosophy" to all comers, on such and such a day, and at such and such an hour, and thereby

challenge a prosecution. So formal an announcement produced the natural result. Copies were purchased by detectives. An Information was laid by the city police, and in due course the complaint was heard before the Aldermen sitting at the Mansion House. This was the commencement of a conflict which lasted over a year, and it is scarcely to be credited that persons in every part of the United Kingdom were persuaded to part with sums of money, under the belief that they were supporting Mr Bradlaugh and his partner in defending the freedom of the English press. The speculation proved successful. Notoriety was gained for both defendants; an immense demand suddenly sprang up for a worthless tract, which was sold at sixpence. Within a few weeks, the "Fruits" realised about *five thousand pounds* PROFIT. An additional revenue of equal amount was derived from the increased circulation of the journal owned by the partnership, and over £1250 was raised in subscriptions "to fight the bigots." Verily the "Fruits" yielded a substantial harvest. In one way or other it put £15,000 into the pockets of the defendants; and the Socialists have reason on their side when they complain that Mr Bradlaugh has extracted large sums of money from the most ignorant part of the public, and now spurns "the lowest rung of the ladder" which has lifted him into affluence.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr Bradlaugh's Reasons for publishing the "Fruits of Philosophy"—Mr Bradlaugh's and Mrs Besant's Preface to the "Fruits"—Bradlaugh and Besant Wire-pulling—Mrs Besant's Account of the so-called "Defying the Authorities"—Correspondence between Mr Watts and Mr Bradlaugh re the "Fruits"—Public Decency shocked by the Sale of the "Fruits" in the Streets—Every Prostitute in England indebted to Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant—The Two Bs. courting Prosecution, thereby gaining Money and Notoriety—"Defence Fund"—Miss Fenwick Miller's Letter—A Probable Result of Her Connection with Mrs Besant—So-called Arrest of the Two Bs. is, at last, made—Empty Bravado of the Two Bs.—The Two Bs. before the Alderman—Alderman requests Females to leave the Court, on account of the Nature of the Evidence—Mr Bradlaugh objects—His Daughters in Court—Mr Bradlaugh's Defence—Alderman commits the Two Bs. for Trial—Alderman's Decision—Mr Foote's Exposure of Mr Bradlaugh's Cruel Treatment of Mr Watts, of Mrs Besant's Inaccuracies, and of the Tactics of the Two Bs. generally—Pleading Poverty, and, at the Same Time, engaging a Private Box in a Theatre—Verily the Advocacy of Filth pays—The Case removed, at the Expense of Simpletons, to the Court of Queen's Bench.

It took Mr Bradlaugh several weeks, after the prosecution of Mr Watts, to shape his course, before he finally incorporated "The Fruits of Philosophy" with his Secularism, and the evidence, as gathered from the columns of his journal, satisfies the average reader that the advocacy of the "Fruits" proceeded from the lust of his principal supporters, and his own desire to acquire

wealth *plus* notoriety. It is rather saddening to witness the coarse abuse levelled against the gentleman who had served him with the obedience and fidelity of a dog. Mr Watts had still belief in the Secular Samson whom he at one time considered to be a hero, so long as he was separated from the lady who, with the bitterness of her sex, had prompted him to assume a position from which it was impossible to recede. A new edition was brought out, to which was attached the following preface:—

“The pamphlet which we now present is one which has been lately prosecuted under Lord Campbell’s Act, and which we re-publish, in order to test the right of publication. It was originally written by Charles Knowlton, M.D., an American physician, whose degree entitles him to be heard with respect on a medical question (*sic*). It is openly sold and widely circulated in America at the present time. It was first published in England about forty years ago, by James Watson, the gallant Radical who came to London and took up Richard Carlile’s work, when Carlile was in gaol. He sold it unchallenged for many years, approved it, and recommended it. It was printed and published by Messrs Holyoake & Co., and found its place, with other works of a similar character, in their ‘Freethought Directory’ of 1853, and was thus identified with Freethought literature at the then leading Freethought dépôt. Mr Austin Holyoake, working in connection with Mr Bradlaugh, at the *National Reformer* office, Johnson’s Court, printed and published it in his turn, and this well-known Freethought advocate, in his ‘Large or Small Families,’ selected this pamphlet, together with R. D. Owen’s ‘Moral Physiology,’ and the ‘Elements of Social Science,’ for special recommendation. Mr Charles Watts, succeeding to Mr Austin Holyoake’s business, continued the sale, and when Mr Watson died, in 1875, he bought the plates of the work (with others) from Mrs Watson, and continued to advertise and to sell it until December 23, 1876. For the last forty years the book has thus been identified with Freethought, advertised by leading Freethinkers, published under the sanction of their names, and sold in the headquarters of Freethought literature. If during this long period the

party had thus—without one word of protest—circulated an indecent work, the less we talk about Freethought morality the better; the work has been largely sold, and if leading Freethinkers have sold it—profiting by the sale—in mere carelessness, few words could be strong enough to brand the indifference which thus scattered obscenity broadcast over the land. The pamphlet has been withdrawn from circulation in consequence of the prosecution instituted against Mr Charles Watts, but the question of its legality or illegality has not been tried; a plea of ‘Guilty’ was put in by the publisher, and the book, therefore, was not examined, nor was any judgment passed upon it; no jury registered a verdict, and the judge stated that he had not read the work.

“We republish this pamphlet, honestly believing that on all questions affecting the happiness of the people, whether they be theological, political, or social, fullest right of free discussion ought to be maintained at all hazards. We do not personally endorse all that Dr Knowlton says: his ‘Philosophical Proem’ seems to us full of philosophical mistakes, and—as we are neither of us doctors—we are not prepared to endorse his medical views; but since progress can only be made through discussion, and no discussion is possible where differing opinions are suppressed, we claim the right to publish all opinions, so that the public, enabled to see all sides of a question, may have the materials for forming a sound judgment.

“The alterations made are very slight; the book was badly printed, and errors of spelling and a few clumsy grammatical expressions have been corrected; the sub-title has been changed, and in one case four lines have been omitted, because they are repeated word for word further on. We have, however, made some additions to the pamphlet, which are in all cases kept distinct from the original text. Physiology has made great strides during the past forty years, and not considering it right to circulate erroneous physiology, we submitted the pamphlet to a doctor in whose accurate knowledge we have the fullest confidence, and who is widely known in all parts of the world as the author of the ‘Elements of Social Science’; the notes signed ‘G. R.’ are written by this gentleman. References to other works are given in footnotes, for the assistance of the reader, if he desires to study the subject further.

“Old Radicals will remember that Richard Carlile published a work entitled ‘Every Woman’s Book,’ which deals with the same subject, and advocates the same object, as Dr Knowlton’s pamphlet.

R. D. Owen objected to the 'style and tone' of Carlile's 'Every Woman's Book' as not being 'in good taste,' and he wrote his 'Moral Physiology,' to do in America what Carlile's work was intended to do in England. This work of Carlile's was stigmatised as 'indecent' and 'immoral,' because it advocated, as does Dr Knowlton's, the use of preventive checks to population. In striving to carry on Carlile's work, we cannot expect to escape Carlile's reproach; but, whether applauded or condemned, we mean to carry it on, socially as well as politically and theologically.

"We believe, with the Rev. Mr Malthus, that population has a tendency to increase faster than the means of existence, and that *some* checks must therefore exercise control over population. The checks now exercised are semi-starvation and preventible disease; the enormous mortality among the infants of the poor, is one of the checks which now keeps down the population. The checks that ought to control population are scientific, and it is these which we advocate. We think it more moral to prevent the conception of children, than, after they are born, to murder them by want of food, air, and clothing. We advocate scientific checks to population, because, so long as poor men have large families, pauperism is a necessity, and from pauperism grow crime and disease. The wage which would support the parents and two or three children in comfort and decency, is utterly insufficient to maintain a family of twelve or fourteen, and we consider it a crime to bring into the world human beings doomed to misery or to premature death. It is not only the hard-working classes which are concerned in this question. The poor curate, the struggling man of business, the young professional man, are often made wretched for life by their inordinately large families, and their years are passed in one long battle to live; meanwhile, the woman's health is sacrificed, and her life embittered, from the same cause. To all of these, we point the way of relief and of happiness; for the sake of these we publish what others fear to issue, and we do it, confident that if we fail the first time, we shall succeed at last, and that the English public will not permit the authorities to stifle a discussion of the most important social question which can influence a nation's welfare.

"CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

"ANNIE BESANT."

The foregoing was followed up by the usual series

of "Notices" to stimulate curiosity. The *National Reformer* reprinted this preface, and a prominent announcement was made that "all engagements of either Mr Bradlaugh or Mrs Besant must now be considered subject to cancelment, in the event of any prosecution," and, "Persons—householders—willing to be bail for Mr Bradlaugh, in the event of his arrest for publishing the Knowlton pamphlet, are requested at once to send him their full names and addresses." Mrs Besant, with the zeal of a new convert, took the lead in fanning the excitement, and defying the authorities. In the *National Reformer* of April 1, 1877, she wrote an account of the preliminary skirmish as follows:—

"Saturday, March 24th.

"We commenced our struggle for the right of publication on Friday last (March 23d), Mr Bradlaugh having travelled from Scotland by the night mail, in order to be in town during Friday. We went first to the Guildhall, and delivered the earliest copy of the 'Fruits of Philosophy' to Mr Martin, the chief clerk to the magistrates, with a written notice stating that we should attend at 23 Stonecutter Street, on Saturday, March 24th, from four to five o'clock, to publicly sell the pamphlet. From the Guildhall—at which I looked with a curiosity personal in its nature—we drove to the head office of the City Police, in Old Jewry, to deliver a similar notice to the Detective Department. Mr Bradlaugh handed over the notification in his most urbane manner, expressing a hope that the authorities would oblige him by arresting us at a convenient hour, so that we might summon our bail in time to prevent the necessity of our passing a night in the cell (*sic*), prior to appearing before the magistrates. The officer in charge, who seemed desirous not to be outdone in politeness, thanked Mr Bradlaugh for his extreme courtesy, and said that he hoped they would be able to meet him in the same spirit. The scene was quite worthy of the (mythic) 'Fire first, gentlemen!' of Fontenoy. We finally visited the office of the Solicitor for the

City of London, where we delivered a similar document, and then returned peacefully to luncheon.

"On Saturday, we went down to Stonecutter Street, accompanied by the Misses Bradlaugh, and Mr and Mrs Touzeau Parris; we arrived at No. 28 at three minutes to four, and found a crowd awaiting us. We promptly filled the window with copies of the pamphlet, as a kind of general notice of the sale within, and then opened the door. The shop was filled immediately, and in twenty minutes over 500 copies were sold. Several detectives favoured us with a visit, and one amused us by coming in and buying two copies from Mr Bradlaugh, and then retiring gracefully; after an interval of perhaps a quarter of an hour he re-appeared, and purchased one from me. The buyer that most raised my curiosity was one of Mr Watts' sons, who came in and bought seven copies, putting down only trade price on the counter. No one is supplied at trade price unless he buys to sell again, and we have all been wondering why Mr Watts should intend to sell the Knowlton pamphlet, after he has proclaimed it to be obscene and indecent. At six o'clock the shutters were put up, and we gave up our amateur shopkeeping; our general time for closing on Saturday is two P.M., but we kept the shop open on Saturday, for the special purpose of selling the Knowlton pamphlet. We sold about 800 copies, besides sending out a large number of country parcels, so that, if the police now amuse themselves in seizing the work, they will entirely have failed in stopping its circulation. The pamphlet, during the present week, will have been sold over England and Scotland, and the only effect of the foolish police interference will be to have sold a large edition. We must add one word of thanks to them for the kindly aid given us by their gratuitous advertisement.

ANNIE BESANT."

Mr Bradlaugh adds some correspondence with Mr Watts, which is piquant, and shows the altered relationship between them. It looks like a threat to inform upon Mr Watts that he was dealing with the book, and thus to induce the authorities to call upon him to surrender for judgment, for breach of his recognisances. It appears that a lad in the employ of Mr Watts applied

for *further* copies, at wholesale trade price, alleging they were "for men in the office." The correspondence was as follows :—

" *March 25th, 1877.*

"MR C. WATTS,—As your son purchased for you seven copies of the Knowlton pamphlet, at trade price, and therefore presumably to sell again, and as this might affect your recognisances, I wish to know whether you object to my printing the fact in the next issue of the *N.R.* ?

C. BRADLAUGH."

" *March 27th, 1877.*

"MR C. BRADLAUGH,—I trust I am duly grateful for the marvelous consideration that prompted you to write me before publishing the fact that my son purchased seven copies of the *revised* new edition of the Knowlton pamphlet. I simply requested him to buy *two*, which I require for my own use. The other five he took upon himself to procure for the men at the office, and two private friends, without my knowledge. When he returned, I forbade him to furnish anyone with them, and the pamphlets are now in my possession. If it will confer any pleasure upon you to publish this fact, kindly give it as herein stated, and I then think your amiable desire to injure me will be frustrated.

CHARLES WATTS."

The Bradlaugh and Besant system of puffing their new shop was carried on in every number of their journal. Special inducements were given to the newspaper vendors to dispose of the "Fruits" in the streets, which formed the commencement of that system of sensationalism which has since become so outrageous a nuisance in the Strand, whenever "Maiden Tributes," or any other questionable publication, is disseminated in an illegitimate manner. An army of ragged hawkers was let loose to thrust the "Fruits" before the attention of young men and women, and public decency was affronted at every step. Mr Bradlaugh, as a purveyor of indecent

literature, sought the profits, if he tried to avoid the pains, of martyrdom; and he who had been a prominent politician, as well as a popular controversialist, was suddenly exalted into a hero, by the occupants of every brothel, whose filthy trade was advertised by the six-penny pamphlet which he published. Mrs Besant's association with Mr Bradlaugh was more difficult to understand. That a cultured woman should cast away the instincts of her sex, and distribute a book with the object of making every woman a prostitute, was something that the most impudent harlot failed to grasp. Others remembered that in English history we once had a Mrs Behn, and although Mary Wolstoncraft was a discarded mistress before she was a wife, yet in her works she never stooped to indecency and immorality. The profits of the publication, however, destroyed any scruples on this score. Still there was delay, and disappointment at no prosecution taking place; so the civic authorities were further worried; and, to assist in the process, the following article (April 8), under the heading of "Prosecution of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant," appeared :—

"As Mr Bradlaugh was engaged to deliver a lecture at Kettering, on Monday (March 26), and did not either want (*sic*) to be prevented from going, nor yet to be apparently running away, he drove to the City Police Commissioners' Office, Old Jewry, on Monday morning, and ascertained that no warrant was out against us. On Tuesday, Mr Bradlaugh visited the police headquarters again, and matters were left as follows :—Mr Bradlaugh promised, for himself and for me, that on and after Thursday, the 29th, we would (*sic*) both attend at 28 Stonecutter Street, from ten to eleven A.M., until arrested. On

Thursday, therefore, we repaired to our editor's den over the shop, and placidly worked while awaiting the foe. Notice had been sent to our bail of the possible arrest, and many of them very kindly came down. . . . Some twenty gentlemen were there, ready to answer for our due appearance at all proper seasons, and all waited patiently until eleven o'clock. Friday, being Good Friday, we were doubtful whether or no we should be required to attend, so we drove once more to the Old Jewry—which is becoming quite a friendly face to me—to ask if we should be required to be there on the following day, since the courts would not be sitting. The very courteous officer there told Mr Bradlaugh that no arrest would be made on either Friday or Saturday, and that we need not put ourselves to the trouble of going to Stonecutter Street; but he hoped all necessary papers would be ready on the following Monday, on which day we must both present ourselves at the promised time; if they were not completed on Monday, they would certainly be ready on Tuesday. We returned to Stonecutter Street, and set free the good friends who had come down to help us out of 'durance vile,' in case of an arrest, and we parted with warm thanks on our part, and kindest words on theirs. We wondered a good deal—as the prosecution had been determined upon—at the unusual delay in issuing the warrant, but light was shortly thrown on the darkness. . . . As we found the enemy so busy with his preparations, we thought that we might as well follow his example, so we promptly drew up and printed the following, which Mr Parris will post to anyone who is willing to work in the matter, and will send his name and address:—

‘DEFENCE FUND.

‘CHARLES BRADLAUGH and ANNIE BESANT.

“‘A prosecution has been commenced against the above, as publishers of a work called Knowlton's “Fruits of Philosophy,” dealing with the Population Question. It is intended to fight the case thoroughly, and naturally such a contest will involve considerable expense. Those only are invited to subscribe to this Defence Fund who consider the course taken by the defendants to be in accord with that pursued by the brave men who, forty years ago, went to gaol to maintain the right of a Free Press.’”

It is rather amusing to read the list of supporters of

the expectant defendants. The lady who figures the most prominent is Miss Fenwick Miller, then a member of the London School Board, who, even since her marriage with Mr F. Ford, wears her maiden name, and who, for many years, had been the leading female writer for the *Illustrated London News* and the *Ladies' Pictorial*. Mrs Fenwick Miller, in a letter to Mrs Besant, says:—

“MY DEAR MRS BESANT,—I feel myself privileged in having the opportunity of expressing both to you and to the public, by giving you my small aid to your defence, how much I admire the noble position taken up by Mr Bradlaugh and yourself upon this attempt to suppress free discussion, and to keep the people in enforced ignorance upon the most important of subjects. It is shameful that you should have to do it, through the cowardice of the less important person, who might have made himself a hero by doing as you now do, but was too weak for his opportunities. Since you have had to do it, however, accept the assurance of my warm sympathy, and my readiness to aid in any way within my power in your fight. Please add my name to your Committee. You will find a little cheque within: I wish I had fifty times as much to give.

“Under other circumstances, the pamphlet might well have been withdrawn from circulation, since its physiology is obsolete, and, consequently, its practical deductions to some extent unsound. But it must be everywhere comprehended that *that is not the point*. The book would have been equally attacked had its physiology been new and sound; the prosecution is against the right to issue a work upon the special subject, and against the freedom of the press and individual liberty.”

This lady certainly showed her sympathy with Mrs Besant, and it would be curious to inquire if the matrons and maidens who drink in the moral inspiration of this lady's articles in the illustrated journals, are aware of her views on physiology. (If I be correctly informed, Mrs Fenwick Miller finds Neo-Malthusian dogmas sometimes

inconvenient. When she married Mr Ford, he generously undertook that his spouse should not "sink her individuality in her husband's name," and allowed her to prefix "Mrs" to her maiden name. Some time afterwards while visiting in Ireland, and on the strength of her reputation, she was invited to a mansion, under the belief that she was Mrs Miller, and not Mrs Ford. This was such an enigma to her hostess that, as soon as the fact dawned upon her Celtic mind, a message was sent by a servant, to inform the guest that the carriage would be at the door at a certain hour, to drive her to the station. It is not alleged here that this was the natural consequence of her acquaintance with Mrs Besant; but, taking it in connection with the remarks of the Master of the Rolls at a later date, the inference to be drawn is not remote.)

The first fortnight's collection for the "Defence Fund" amounted to upwards of £200, so that, with the enormous sale of the sixpenny "Fruits," financial success was attained. The warrants were at last issued, and the arrests—if, indeed, arrests they can be called—made. There was a tremendous round of compliments lavished on the heroes who gulled their dupes into believing that "they fought for a free discussion." Then there was a triumphant march to the Mansion House, where an agreed-on adjournment for ten days was taken, to prepare the defence, and to pile up the agony of the "Defence Fund," which appeared to be the principal object the defendants had in view. To

aid in this, a farcical announcement was made to the National Secular Society:—

“We, in the exercise of what we believe to be our right and duty, have published a pamphlet, entitled Knowlton’s ‘Fruits of Philosophy.’ On the 29th March, a prosecution was commenced against us for this act. As we hold official positions in the Society, we have deemed it right to place our resignations in the hands of the Executive, so that it may not be pretended by anyone that we desire to involve the Society in our act. Personally, we do not desire to resign our offices, which we shall feel pride and honour in being allowed to retain, but we do desire that the Executive shall feel free to take the course it thinks wisest for the good of the movement.

“CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

“ANNIE BESANT.”

The foregoing is but another drop into the Bradlaugh and Besant bucket of empty bounce. William Maccall has surely aptly designated them “Brassy Cheek” and “Breezy Bouncer.” They well knew that they would be re-elected with further glorification and “Votes of Confidence” from all the Secular Societies who responded to the wire-pullers. The prosecution was opened by Mr Douglas Straight, before Mr Alderman Figgins. In the speech of counsel, the points were taken that the pamphlet was “lewd, filthy, and obscene,” and published for purposes of gain, with the intention of corrupting public morals. It was stated that the defence would most probably be that the book was a medical and a physiological work, and, as such, ought to be issued. The prosecution, anticipating such defence, said that medical books would be undoubtedly obscene if the plates on midwifery and functional disorders of the organs of generation were exhibited in

the shop windows or hawked about the streets; and the question of price and distribution was an element in the inquiry. At an early stage, the Alderman wished to exclude females from the court, on the ground of the indecent nature of the evidence. Mr Bradlaugh protested against such a course, alleging that his two daughters were in court; and the Alderman, finding he had no power to order them out of the court, said, "I am sorry, after the remark I have already made, that women still remain in court; but if they will not leave, I cannot order them to be turned out; but it will restrain counsels' remarks very much, because *I shall not allow* any of the extracts from the book to be read." In accordance with this ruling, at nearly every stage of this remarkable case, both before the Alderman and the special jury, a large number of books had to be perused in silence, to prevent public morals being corrupted, and this part of the evidence was practically disposed of *in camera*. The evidence of the prosecution did not take long. The defence was opened by Mr Bradlaugh in an able speech, in which he argued that "checks" to population were necessary, and that he should produce a vast array of technical works, written by the most eminent medical men, who had published books covering precisely the same grounds. Objections were taken to the calling of witnesses to vouch as to the "indecent" of the book as a medical work, but the books themselves were given in evidence, although not read openly in court. The main argument was that the principal text-

book used for examination by Government (Dr Carpenter's) in the technical schools, advocated similar processes to those of Knowlton. If, then, argued Mr Bradlaugh, young men and women were directed by official examiners to study those subjects, it was sufficient proof of Knowlton's being a proper treatise to place in the hands of the public. The pile of medical works put in evidence, was alleged to be out of the reach of the working classes; and the cheap copies of Dr Bell's "Hints to Mothers," and Dr Chavasse's "Advice to a Wife," were sold publicly at the railway bookstalls. It was argued that these books give the same instructions, but were not prosecuted. "Why then should Knowlton be singled out?" demanded Mr Bradlaugh. With the skill of an accomplished lawyer, evidence was accumulated upon evidence in support of this proposition, without making any impression on the Alderman who tried the case the City Authorities prosecuted.

The tactics used by Mr Bradlaugh had been resorted to in every case of libel during the century, where a book was on the border line of ultra-theology or ultra-grossness. When Paine's "Age of Reason" was prosecuted as blasphemous, the advocate alleged that the two celebrated chapters of Gibbon on Christianity were more directly opposed to the National Religion, but were never prosecuted. Byron's "Vision of Judgment" was actionable, but Shelley was protected. The answer was that the former was reprinted at a few pence, and the latter never left the library of the scholar. Every

scoundrel who published obscene prints relied upon the photographic reproductions of nude statuary. Mr Bradlaugh's attempt was to place logic above common-sense. The intuitive instinct of decency revolted at the vile suggestions of a pamphlet which was advertised as a specific against maternity, and the manner in which it was used was a sufficient demonstration of the objects of the persons who had taken it up as a matter of trade, and wished to give the public the impression that it might be safely adopted on the authority of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant, who would not personally identify themselves with any process unless they had had the best means for vouching its efficiency. After two days occupied in the reading of medical authorities, the case was at last brought to a conclusion by the Magistrate's informing Mr Bradlaugh of his intention to commit for trial. In pronouncing his decision, Alderman Figgins said:—

“I believe it is a pamphlet not published in the interests of science, but issued as a popular publication at a low price for general reading, and that it is a production against the public morals, because it is a publication which directly points out, not only how the families of married women may be limited, but how unmarried women may gratify their passions, without fear of the natural consequences. It, in short, thus raises the question of Lord Chief-Justice Campbell, ‘Does this work suggest to the minds of the young of either sex thoughts of an impure and libidinous character?’ To answer this it will be for a jury.”

In reply to the Magistrate's question as to whether he had anything to say against being sent before a Grand Jury, Mrs Besant told the Alderman that she

relied upon the defence set up by her co-defendant, and complained of the indignities of having to undergo a personal search, the same as any other prisoner arrested on a Warrant was subjected to. Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant were then allowed to depart from the court, on their personal recognisances.

At this stage of the advertisement for their new publishing business—for the whole prosecution can be viewed only as an advertisement, designed to sell their printed wares—it is well to look at the reality of this profitable martyrdom. Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant were two public entertainers whose comfortable existence depended entirely upon keeping their names before the world. They had entered into a speculation where a fortune was to be made upon the lines of Professor Barnum. There was no necessity for their liberty to be placed in danger in pushing forward an obscene pamphlet. But obscenity in literature commands a fancy price, and it is well known that when the most worthless books are placed under a legal ban, a prodigious sale is then sure to arise. Mr Bradlaugh did not at first seize upon this. It was the clever idea of his (business) partner. He acknowledged that he had an interest in it. Probably he would not have kicked Mr Watts over of his own accord. Mrs Besant, he acknowledged, brought him “quite to her way of thinking,” and, as Mr Foote very aptly says:—

“Her way of thinking was that the case should be fought through : Mr Watts was to go to prison, and the lady and her ‘chief’

were to look after his interests during his incarceration. Mr Watts, however, did not view the matter in the same light. He reflected that if he went to prison as a seller of indecent literature, while Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant stumped the country on the question of the freedom of the press, they would reap profit and glory, and he the reverse. But the 'chief' was a despotic man, although abstractly and from the platform, to people who pay threepence a head for illumination, a preacher of democracy; and he determined to put on the screw and compel his lieutenant's submission. Mr Watts published the 'chief's' paper, the *National Reformer*, and was his general publisher besides. At that moment he had, in expectation of those business arrangements continuing, just entered possession of expensive premises in Fleet Street, and the name of Mr Bradlaugh's paper had been actually lettered on the shop-window. He had also invested in new type, and altogether his position was very dependent on the 'chief's' favour. Mr Bradlaugh summoned his lieutenant to Mrs Besant's house, and presented him this alternative: either to defend the 'Fruits of Philosophy,' or to receive immediate notice of the termination of the publishing arrangements between them, which the 'chief' said meant ruin. Mr Watts asked time to consider the matter; his eldest son lay dying, as the doctors and everybody else thought, and he was half distracted. Mr Bradlaugh, seeing his advantage, refused delay, and, backed by Mrs Besant, demanded instant obedience. But they over-reached themselves; the lieutenant's gorge rose against such treatment; he flung back a retort, accepted his dismissal, and appealed to the Freethought party. Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant then called themselves the 'Freethought Publishing Company,' and took a shop, where they published the *National Reformer* and other literature; and there also they brought out a new edition of the 'Fruits of Philosophy,' as they were bound to do after their treatment of Mr Watts, in order to preserve some appearance of decency and conformity to the principles they preached. Mrs Besant, in her protracted speech during the recent trial at the Queen's Bench, tried to make out that she and Mr Bradlaugh had taken a shop in order to publish the Knowlton pamphlet. She said (*National Reformer*, June 23d, p. 403):—'We were not printers before, but we became printers that we might print this book; we became publishers that we might publish this book; and we took a shop that we might sell this book.' Readers who have followed me so far will be able to estimate how much truth there is in this state-

ment. Mrs Besant continued,—‘and we did all this at a time when danger attached to it, and we had nothing to gain and much to lose by so doing.’ Readers who follow me further will be able to estimate how much truth there is in this statement also.

“Anyone who will take the trouble to read the published statements on both sides of the foregoing dispute, will find that Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant did not become printers and publishers in order to issue the ‘Fruits of Philosophy’ when all others quailed ; on the contrary, they assumed these fresh responsibilities because they had both broken away from their common publisher, and deemed it more profitable to engage a manager for a new concern of their own than to allow the profits of publishing their paper and their works to flow into another’s pocket. They did not determine to publish the prosecuted pamphlet until they had been repeatedly urged not to call Mr Watts a mean, despicable coward, but to show their own courage by belling the cat themselves. This, then, their own conduct to Mr Watts and the subsequent taunts of a large (and by no means the least intelligent) section of the Freethought party, compelled them to do. There was no escape, unless they were prepared to encounter the censure and contempt of the party they supposed themselves to lead. But, in pursuing this course, they could easily perceive that no danger threatened them, while profit and notoriety—which to them means profit—would most certainly accrue. Mr Watts had stood in the position of a detected man ; they resolved to take the initiative by challenging the authorities before selling a single copy, and thus place themselves in the position of persons who from pure motives were resolved to test the validity of the prosecutor’s allegation against the pamphlet. Mr Watts was sure of imprisonment if he defended the work ; they were sure of not risking imprisonment. Mr Watts would have stood as an ordinary defendant in a criminal prosecution ; they knew that by pretending to champion the freedom of the Press and the dissemination of knowledge on an immensely important subject, they would lift their defence to a higher level, and make it a great public question, upon which they could boldly and confidently appeal for support. And in order to render their position safer still, they considerably altered the character of the prosecuted publication. Its sub-title—‘Private Companion of Young Married Couples,’ which gave it an air of quackery, was removed ; and another substituted—‘An Essay on the Population Question.’ A lengthy preface was inserted by the

new publishers, setting forth the humane and admirable motives which animated them; a medical man was employed to furnish footnotes wherever the author's antiquated views required correction; and, to crown all, the publishers anticipated the charge of complicity with Knowlton by affirming his 'Philosophical Proem' to be full of 'philosophical mistakes,' and declining to 'endorse his medical views;' so that, although the pamphlet might be found indecent, they were secure against participating in its condemnation.

"The next step was to appeal for pecuniary aid, which soon forthcame. Lovers of free discussion, believers in Malthus, invincible believers in Mr Bradlaugh, and people who like to encourage a contest with the powers that be, sent in their subscriptions most readily. . . . Mr Bradlaugh knew that subscriptions would flow in for a fight with authority; he knew that a prosecuted publication would sell to almost any extent; he knew that he stood in no danger of imprisonment; and yet Mrs Besant pathetically told the jury that they 'did all this at a time when *danger* attached to it, and they had nothing to *gain* and much to *lose* by so doing!'"

The real thing was the money collected. By the time of the committal, the "Defence Fund" had amounted to upwards of £400, and the profits of the "Fruits" were enormous. The poor Secularists were told that the "*freedom* of the Press" was in danger, and they believed it. Half-starved workmen, half-mad zealots, all collected their pence to minister to the vanity of the two defendants, who meanwhile treated themselves to private boxes at the theatres, and, presumably, champagne and oysters, etc., after the theatres closed. Wealth flowed in, while the story of "my debts" was pathetically described, both in the press and on the platform. People were engaged day and night in printing the filthy pamphlet, which was so artfully and freely advertised by every newspaper in the country. The next step was

to heighten the sensation by getting the trial removed by *certiorari* from the Central Criminal Court to the Court of Queen's Bench, on the ground that "points of law" would arise which required a special jury. And thus was the nasty but lucrative "boom" set fairly on foot.

CHAPTER XX.

A Common Jury not good enough for Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant—Extracts from the Affidavit of the Two B.'s, asking for a Special Jury—The Two B.'s toadies to Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn—The Begging-Box of the Two B.'s brings in £150 per Week—Mr Bradlaugh's Impudent Letter to Those whom He styles His "Country Friends"—The Indictment against the Two B.'s, wherein the "Fruits" is styled an Indecent, Lewd, Filthy, Bawdy, and Obscene Book; contaminating, vitiating, and corrupting the Morals of Youth, etc., etc.—The Trial—Mrs Besant's Argument in Court—Mr Bradlaugh, gratuitously, becomes the Sycophant of Sir Alexander Cockburn, and the Censor of Dr Kenealy—"Fruits" Verdict—Appeal—Mr G. J. Holyoake repudiates all Connection with Mr Bradlaugh's Obscene Pamphlet, and writes a Letter to the Times—Sends another Communication to Mr Bradlaugh—The Two B.'s refuse to insert Letters hostile to Obscenity in their Journal—Mr Truelove committed for Trial—He is practically forsaken by Mr Bradlaugh, who utilised him as a "Dirtite" Sacrifice—Mr Truelove sentenced to Six Months' Hard Labour for selling Obscenity, while Mr Bradlaugh realised Thousands of Pounds by the Wholesale Dissemination of the same—The "Defence Committee" are Mr Bradlaugh's Tools—How the Funds were exhausted—"Dirtite" Martyrs versus Real Martyrs—Mr Bradlaugh contrives to extract more Coppers from His Dupes—Besant v. Besant—Money which should be used for Mr Truelove's Defence used in Mrs Besant's Defence—Her Teachings calculated to corrupt Her Daughter's Morality—The "Fruits" substituted by a New Work by Mrs Besant—The Leeds Infidel Orgies—Shocking Revelations—No Barrister would plead for the Infidels—"Saladin" on Low Infidelity—How the Crimes à la mode the City of the Plain are to be accounted for—Why did Mr Bradlaugh not repudiate all or any Connection with the Promoters of the Orgies?—The Promoters belonged to the Society of which he is President—How Mr Bradlaugh, ever and anon, worked for His own Glorification at the Expense of the Credulous.

HOWEVER satisfactory a democratic common jury might be for an ordinary tribunal, where life and

liberty are concerned, Mr Bradlaugh did not think it good enough to have the decision of his case entrusted to such a panel in the Old Bailey. Possibly Mr Charles Watts agreed with him in this matter, when he chose to accept a safe conduct by the golden bridge of retreat. At a later stage, a common jury was considered sufficient for Mr Truelove, when Mr Bradlaugh's trial had exhausted, or was said to have exhausted, the Freethought Funds, and this old publicist paid the penalty of his heroism on a plank bed. Mr Bradlaugh did not intend to leave anything to chance. He, and his co-defendant, made an affidavit alleging sufficient reasons why a writ of *certiorari* should not issue to remove the Indictment (when found) to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court. From the affidavit, *inter alia*, I extract the following:—

5. "That leading articles have appeared in many of the London and provincial papers relating to the said charge, and that some of the said articles have been of an extremely intemperate and hostile character, and that some of such journals circulate very largely in the district from which the common jury would be summoned for the sessions to which we stand committed.

6. "That considerable excitement prevails in the district from which the jury would be summoned, and we are advised and believe that it would be difficult to have a fair and impartial trial of the said case from a common jury at the said sessions.

7. "That questions of law of more than usual difficulty are likely to arise from the trial of the said case, especially as to the admissibility of certain classes of evidence.

8. "That, in the event of the rejection of the evidence produced by us on the trial of this case, and one class of which evidence has been rejected, the jury alone will have to decide as to the character of the publication, and we say that, under all the circumstances, we

verily believe that a special jury should be required for the satisfactory trial of the charge.

9. "That this application is not made for the purpose of delay, but is *bonâ fide* for the purpose of ensuring a fair trial, and we verily believe that we have a good defence on the merits."

Mr Bradlaugh made his application on the ground that the prosecution was based upon an alleged obscene book, but which he contended was a *bonâ fide* treatise on the Population Question. He said that it was a matter which

"I am entitled to submit to a special jury, because it is the province of the jury to decide, and this decision will be unassisted by any light from outside. A common jury would alone determine the character of the work, supposing the whole of the evidence I shall wish to submit should not be admitted to guide their judgment on the matter. I admit that there are difficulties connected with whether the evidence is admissible or not, but, as a portion of my right, I wish to have an opportunity of tendering on the trial and having the admissibility of that evidence decided by the High Court. There have been some other matters which I will not weary your lordships with, but I will just mention that articles have been published in papers of the highest circulation, some of them in the districts from whence a common jury would come—if the case were tried at the Central Criminal Court—saying that we ought to be convicted whether the statute would allow or not, and others recommending that we ought to be sent to prison with hard labour, without even a trial. I think I have sufficient confidence in tribunals to say that this does not weigh much with those in authority, but there is a great deal of excitement in the district from which a common jury would come, and that is an additional ground upon which I ask your lordships for a special jury on the matter."

Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn (with whom was Mr Justice Mellor) not only granted the application, but consented to Mr Bradlaugh's personal recognisances in

the sum of £400, as security for the costs of the removal from the Central Criminal Court to the Court of Queen's Bench. So jubilant were the defendants, that the "chief" suggested to the "chiefess" the advisability of engaging a private box in the Lyceum to see Henry Irving in Richard III. They went to the theatre, with money wrung from the hard hands of those who could barely get bread, and performed other high jinks which are partially recorded in their journal. They might well enjoy themselves while they were young, for the "Defence Fund" was increasing at the rate of £150 per week. At this juncture, the "Notices to Correspondents" contain curious readings. A bevy of sympathisers are told—

"We thank you all most heartily; it is gratifying, while we have a powerful enemy to contend with in front, and while a few vile cowards are industriously circulating calumnies through the country against us."

The "calumnies" complained of appear to have been statements as to the profits made by the "Fruits" speculation, which roused the anger of other "Free-thinkers," who were not permitted to join in the Holywell Street speculation. Another notice says,—

"Country friends should remember that in a sudden rush of business, coupled with a police prosecution, it is unavoidable that some delays should occur. If everyone will be forbearing, all will get attended to, but the labour of merely opening the letters is something very great, as on some days they have been more than 400 in the day. No orders of any kind can be executed *unless accompanied with cheque, post-office order, or stamps*. All items

above one shilling should be paid for in post-office order, or Cheque-Bank cheque. Letters asking for reply, and unaccompanied with a stamped and directed envelope are destroyed unanswered. The *National Reformers* for April 8th and 22d are out of print. It is useless for persons to ask for execution of orders by return of post; all orders are filed and executed as quickly as our staff (which has been increased to meet the pressure) can get through. Persons who are in too great a hurry to wait their turn will save themselves and ourselves from annoyance by withholding their orders."

Immediately following this is an official report, in "leader" type, of a lecture on "The Biography and Character of Victoria, the present Usurper of the British Throne," which represented the republican side of Secularism as it is known by the "chief" and his erudite followers, but by no one else.

In due course the Grand Jury returned a "true bill," and a curious disclosure is made in an article as to the method by which the prosecution was forced on. Mr Bradlaugh says,—

"When myself and Mrs Besant determined to publish the Knowlton Pamphlet, we talked over the matter with a personal friend, who is also one of the most able criminal lawyers in England, and who tried very hard to dissuade us, saying at last, when he found we were resolved, 'Well, if you do publish it, I shall see you both standing in the dock of the Old Bailey.'"

The gentleman referred to by Mr Bradlaugh must have been Mr George Lewis, and his view of the law proved to be correct. Mr Bradlaugh tried in vain to find out who was the real prosecutor, as the City Authorities denied that they were the instigators, and the person put forward was merely a police officer

named Simmons. Care was taken to secure control of the "Defence Money," as "Mr Bradlaugh was authorised to place £400 to a special account in the bank, to answer the costs of the prosecution, so that, in the event of a conviction, the goods of himself and Mrs Besant might not be liable for seizure and sale." While this was going on, Mr Truelove's shop was visited by the police, and a considerable number (1200) of Robert Dale Owen's "Moral Physiology" was seized, and the seizure resulted in magisterial proceedings. In the same number of the *National Reformer* the indictment against Bradlaugh and Besant appeared, of which the following is a copy:—

"The Jurors for our Lady the Queen, upon their oath, present that Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant unlawfully and wickedly devising, and contriving and intending, as much as in them lay, to vitiate and corrupt the morals as well of youth as of divers others liege subjects of our said Lady the Queen, and to incite and encourage the said liege subjects to indecent, obscene, unnatural, and immoral practices, and bring them to a state of wickedness, lewdness, and debauchery, therefore, to wit, on the 24th day of March, A.D. 1877, in the City of London, and within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court, unlawfully, wickedly, knowingly, wilfully, and designedly did print, publish, sell, and utter a certain indecent, lewd, filthy, and obscene libel, to wit, a certain indecent, lewd, filthy, bawdy, and obscene book, called 'Fruits of Philosophy,' thereby contaminating, vitiating, and corrupting the morals as well of youth as of other liege subjects of our said Lady the Queen, and bringing the said liege subjects to a state of wickedness, lewdness, debauchery, and immorality, in contempt of our said Lady the Queen and her laws, to the evil and pernicious example of all others in the same case offending, and against the peace of our said Lady the Queen, her crown, and dignity."

The trial took place before the Lord-Chief Justice of England. The Solicitor-General led for the prosecution. The course of procedure adopted for the prosecution went in the direction of proving that the "Fruits" were suggestive, improper, and did not come under the category of a medical work. From the point of view of the defendants, the argument submitted to the Court was cogent and well put, but the argument of the Solicitor-General was never fairly met. The abstract doctrines of Malthus may, as logical propositions, be irrefutable, but Malthus would have been horrified on being informed that his self-styled disciples would one day carry his theory into practice, by making prostitution the medium of checking the birth-rate of the community. The prosecution admitted that the information given in the "Fruits" was to be found in several medical works, which had, during the trial, been put in evidence, but it was pointed out that medical texts-books were high-priced, and were used only professionally by cultured and educated persons above a certain age, and on that account they were considered by the State to be privileged. In many respects Mrs Besant's arguments were utterly absurd. She spoke of "mothers who beg me to persist in the course on which I have entered, and at any hazard to myself, at any cost, and at any risk, they plead me to save their daughters from the misery they have themselves passed through during the course of their married lives." Mr Bradlaugh's co-defendant

did not see the anachronism of her position; for, if "mothers who begged her to persist in the course on which she had entered," were cognisant of the so-called scientific knowledge which was promulgated by Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant, they would themselves naturally convey it to their daughters in the privacy of domestic intercourse, without the medium of a sixpenny obscene pamphlet, from the profits of which it was notorious, the two defendants were amassing several hundreds of pounds per week, while, all the time, they were soliciting and receiving large public subscriptions from poor men and women earning a bare subsistence.

The Lord Chief-Justice was known to be favourable to Malthusianism, and strong efforts had been made to elicit his sympathy by no doubtful means. Sir Alexander Cockburn in his younger days, and, in his older days, had, as far as feminine intrigues were concerned, been anything but a strictly moral man; and he had deeply resented the vehement imputations made against him by Dr Kenealy, in his journal, after the Tichborne trial. The imputations were poignantly felt; and as the dignity of the Lord Chief-Justice would not permit of a prosecution for libel, he felt grateful to any persons who went out of their way, as did Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant in the *National Reformer*, to bestow upon him almost fulsome epithets of praise. Copies of the *National Reformer*, containing the Bradlaugh and Besant commendations of Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn, were forwarded to his intimate acquaintance, with

the laudatory passages marked, under the belief that they would be brought under the personal observation of the eminent judge. Not only were marked copies of the *National Reformer* brought, by a circuitous course, under the attention of the Lord Chief-Justice, but Mr Bradlaugh, both on the platform and in the press, took upon himself the position of voluntary censor of Dr Kenealy as well as defender of the Court, against the attacks of that pertinacious advocate. The public had before them the edifying spectacle of a brace of demagogues—the one launching out in invective against the Lord Chief-Justice, the other bespattering the judicial ermine with nauseating flattery. How could the judge be severe upon two defendants who so obsequiously acted as his toadies even to the extent of hurling denunciations against the personal antagonist of his lordship?

As a means for avoiding penal conviction, the defendants were not, perhaps, to be blamed for adopting the course they pursued; but, when they speak of “martyrdom for Freethought,” the falsity of the assertion makes the vile imposture appear ludicrous. Mr Bradlaugh’s defence of himself was, as a piece of special pleading, extremely clever; and that of his fair co-defendant also merited attention. It was impossible for a trial to take place where more latitude could be allowed to the accused; and the summing-up of the Lord Chief-Justice formed one of those legal treats, which were looked forward to during the years Sir Alexander Cockburn presided at.

the head of the Court of Queen's Bench. If ever a judge argued for the defence it was on that occasion. His lordship did not like the system of policemen acting as prosecutors; and with his keen insight into the method of instituting criminal proceedings, he wished to put his foot down upon dangerous legal innovations. The jury, fortunately enough, were not to be blinded by sophistry, nor were they capable of being intimidated by the mob who howled at the City Authorities, so they, after due consideration of all evidence in the action, returned a verdict of *guilty*. When compared with the sentence passed upon Mrs Jeffries, and other persons who tenanted brothels, and derived large incomes from trading in that which is revolting to all respectable people, the sentence passed on Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant, for printing, publishing, and selling a pamphlet, which was held by the Court to be filthy and obscene, could be called only nominal. Six months' imprisonment as first-class misdemeanants, with a fine of £200 each, and the addition of finding securities for good behaviour during a term of two years, could not be considered as a severe sentence for such an offence as scattering broadcast an obscene pamphlet, 120,000 copies of which had been sold within a few weeks. The defendants gave notice of appeal on points of law which had been "reserved," which, upon argument, were held to be good objections, and they ultimately succeeded in quashing the conviction on purely technical grounds.

The columns of the *National Reformer* contain the

joyful record of the "Fruits" conflict; but the personal rancour which it occasioned amongst the Free-thinking party rendered it a dearly-bought victory. The Watts connection with Bradlaugh ended in litigation, while the Foote section quarrelled with, and afterwards ignored the Bradlaughites, and Mr G. J. Holyoake, the Nestor of a certain following of primitive Secularists, wrote a letter to the *Times* repudiating any connection with the brothel pamphlet. The writing of this letter brought down upon him an avalanche of opposition, in reply to which, the Nestor sent a communication to Mr Bradlaugh, from which the following is extracted:—

"You have several times published that I was content to 'make profit' by selling this book, and did not dissent from it then. Both statements are untrue. The sale of this book at Fleet Street from 1854 to 1860, together with the more careful book of R. D. Owen, did not produce £6 of profit each. As I paid Mr Watson £350, and as the sale of his small series of books was all the advantage that accrued to me, the 'profit' I made does not deserve the conspicuousness you give it. This accusation of profit is as groundless as it is unhandsome. Money might have been made by the sale of books such as you have taken in hand. Many were offered me when I was a publisher, but I refused alike to publish, or sell them, or call attention to them, as it is not known now for the first time. You sent me a shilling subpoena (giving the idea of a very cheap trial) to ask me, you say, whether printing was not done in my house from Mr Watson's plates; I should have answered that a question more devoid of truth was never invented. No person, unless utterly ignorant of Mr Watson's way of doing business, could imagine it. You state last week that the book indicted 'passed from Mr Holyoake's hands to Mr Watts's.' Whereas sixteen years elapsed between its being at my house and its passing to Mr Watts—during which time I never saw the book. You say I sold the

book 'when there was no danger,' meaning that my objection to this book is not honest—the fear of danger explains it. Is this so? The danger I have been accustomed to encounter has been real. These are dainty days of martyrdom compared with those I have lived in. Scarcely one hundred shillings could be collected after sentence, now £2000 of gifts and gain strew the path to court. There was privation, which brought death into my household during my imprisonment. Nor have I ever declined similar risks where useful. We had no tender gaolers, or courteous judges, or complimentary juries. While if you and your co-defendant are locked two hours, in daytime, in a magistrate's court, amid a shower of official civilities, we are all invited to weep in the *National Reformer*, and readers exhaust their pocket handkerchiefs in wiping their eyes. We did not print apologetic prefaces with what we defended—we did not omit damaging particulars; we employed no one to buffer or bolster indictable matter; we did not move to quash the trial, or get up appeals to Courts of Error. We made a clean fight. Watson nor Heatherington did not make pathetic declarations that some one had done them 'grievous and irreparable wrong' by simply writing to the *Times*, and saying they had never 'published the book by their own choice and selection.' They did not squeal in this ignorant way. Nor did they insult those who were considerate to them, and, making friendliness impossible, complain that they do not help them. Do you know that the reason why the Knowlton book was tolerated in its earlier years, was because it superseded a coarser production—Carlile's 'Every Woman's Book'—which brought so much mischief to the Freethought party in his day? You cannot make it an offence that I repudiated a similar implication. Is it competent for you to approve the book, and not competent for me to disapprove it? Numerous persons who made sacrifices for the honour and repute of Freethought before you knew it, are opposed to this book. Am I who counselled the party before you were known, to keep Secular thought above suspicion, to stand silent when you—from what motive I know not—sought to pledge my concurrence with the book? I suppose I misunderstand you—for if you really mean this by your complaint that I defended myself—I should say, to use an expression of Guizot, this would be conduct to be despised only that 'it cannot rise to the level of my contempt.' I suppose the Lord Chief-Justice must have thought my letter to the *Times* and *Daily News*

fair and necessary to my own vindication, since he refused to allow you to resent it. In it—as all along, while this indictment has been on hand—I have treated you with scrupulous forbearance and consideration. I permitted much misrepresentation rather than seem to prejudice your case. What independent support which did not confound Secularism with this Knowlton book I encouraged. Discriminating support is all that can be given where Freethought exists. To ask absolute coincidence is to appeal to the ignorant, the servile, or the timid; and it is more honourable to have abuse for refusing this assent than to receive credit for according weak and degrading acquiescence.”

Further correspondence was refused insertion in the *Bradlaugh and Besant Journal*, styled, audaciously, the *National Reformer*. Mr Holyoake, being far from implacable in his opposition, has since weakly made peace with his hectoring successor and insulter; and wherever his principles demand his presence, he sinks personal animosity, and, rather than drop out of sight altogether, voluntarily follows as a captive in the triumphal procession, headed by Mr Bradlaugh in the periodical high jinks and mockeries called “Conferences,” which are held in the “Hall of Science” and elsewhere.

Here it will be well to refer to a subject that deserves comment. Mr Edward Truelove was prosecuted by the “Vice Society,” or rather by the solicitor who combined the profession of stigmatising the Scarlet Lady of Babylon in unreadable pamphlets, and employing detectives to ferret out Holywell Street prosecutions, which brought legal grist to the mill, until the legal machine was stopped by one of those *contre-temps* which prevents the renewal of a solicitor’s certificate. The City Authori-

ties having taken up the case of the Bradlaugh (Knowlton) pamphlet, the "Vice Society" laid information against Mr Truelove for the sale of Robert Dale Owen's "Moral Physiology." Mr Truelove was committed for trial. A writ of *certiorari* was (as in the case of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant) obtained for removing the cause from the Central Criminal Court to the Court of Queen's Bench. An abortive trial took place. The money difficulty supervened. About £1300 was collected by the Secularist dupes, and used by the Bradlaugh and Besant Defence Committee. The utility of a removal of the trial from the criminal to the civil side lay in the fact that a special jury would be obtained in the higher court who might not be so prejudiced against the prisoner. Money was required to engage counsel and conduct the defence after the manner of the Bradlaugh and Besant prosecution. The "Fruits" defence having swallowed, or alleged to have swallowed, all the "Defence Fund," no money was forthcoming to meet the Truelove defence. Under such circumstances the "Vice Society" got the indictment retransferred to the Old Bailey. As far as Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant were concerned, a paramount point was settled. For the time being they succeeded in airing their vain-glory; in obtaining a wide-spread advertisement; in becoming martyrs in the estimation of the vulgar; and, above all, in reaping an incredibly rich golden harvest from the sale of obscenity. All this having been accomplished, could the fate of honest Edward Truelove con-

cern them? Of a truth, no. Mr Truelove had lived to see the sun rise and set for well-nigh seventy years; and Mr Bradlaugh and his friends concluded that a common jury was good enough for *him*. He met his fate with dignity, and suffered an imprisonment with hard labour. Poor Truelove was not treated to a private box at the Lyceum, nor had he a cab at his disposal to rush from one Government office to another to ostentatiously "defy the authorities," neither was there allotted to him a column in the *National Reformer*, where he was allowed to howl about "my debts;" and he had not £6000 invested in securities in Italy, nor a journal worth £2000 in England. He was poor. Poverty sent him to prison, while private wealth and public begging and legal quibbles permitted of Mr Bradlaugh's occupying private boxes at the theatre, while the ladies of his family could be followed by their grooms in livery, in their equestrian exercises in Rotten Row. Who, after this, could be incredulous enough to doubt that Mr Bradlaugh is the friend of the poor man, and that he has at all times disinterestedly fought for the freedom of thought, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press?

That Mr Edward Truelove was sacrificed owing to the absorption of the funds, in the self-glorifying defence of Mr Bradlaugh and his (business) partner is plainly proved in the reports of the Defence Committee, and their disposition of the funds placed at their command. It was well known that proceedings would be taken against Mr Truelove (and, indeed, an action

was pending against him almost *pari passu* with that against Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant) who had, in his way, worked over fifty years, to the best of his ability, in the interests of what he conceived to be "Free-thought." It has invariably been the policy of the leaders of the Erotic School of Secularism, to ignore all coadjutors in order to accentuate the better their own individual claims on their dupes. When, in 1855, the Fleet Street Institution of Mr G. J. Holyoake was started to centralise a bureau for disseminating anti-theological literature, Mr Robert Cooper protested against the project of a private bookseller's shop being subsidised for a party; and in 1855 he pointed at the then long career of Mr Truelove, whose opinions were equally as pronounced as those of Mr G. J. Holyoake. Mr Cooper told the party that he failed to see any reason why Mr Holyoake should be selected as an object for pecuniary gifts, when his co-shopkeeper, Mr Truelove, carried on a similar business with equal prominence to that of, and less personal assumption than, the proprietor of the "Institution." Twenty-two years afterwards, when the Holyoake dynasty had been shattered, and the Bradlaugh *régime* had been fairly established on the usurped throne of Infidelity, there was still the Truelove skeleton shaking its bony fingers at the Egyptian banquet, where Thais reigned with her Lord, and the ghastly sight shocked the pride which, Haman-like, was felt when Mordecai lived. Those who revolved around the triumph-car of Mr Bradlaugh, thought that the dignity

which would attach to Mr Truelove, if his action were heard in the Court of Queen's Bench, would materially tend to deteriorate and tarnish the imperial splendour of the "chief." To prevent such a catastrophe, it was decided to waste all the money possible on the defence of the "Fruits," and thereby exhaust the exchequer, by which the defence of treason and sedition could be maintained. How the project was carried into practice will be seen from a report, "Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, and Edward Truelove" (*National Reformer*, 17th March 1878).

"At a special meeting of the committee held at the Hall of Science, February 28, 1878,—Mrs Renwick, present, in the chair: Present, Messrs Swaagman, Truelove, Le Lubez, Grout, Wayham, Reynolds, Haines, Renwick, Wade, Willis, and Bradlaugh. Madames Besant, Le Lubez, Wayham, Grout, Willis, and Misses Bradlaugh and H. Bradlaugh,—

"Mr Bradlaugh made a lengthy statement of what had been done in each case, and of the present aspect of affairs, of the amounts disbursed, and was followed by Mrs Besant, who explained what was being done with a view to Parliamentary action.

"Moved by M. Le Lubez, seconded by Mr Reynolds,—

"That this committee thoroughly approve the conduct of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant in their appeal in the Court of Error. . . . That Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant be requested still to act as treasurers to the Defence Fund, and solely have the responsibilities and control of the expenditure, and of the conduct of Mr Truelove's defence, and of the appeal to the Quarter Sessions. (Carried unanimously.)

"Early in December last we published a statement, showing £1142 then received, of which £400 was deposited as against the recognisances, and £873, 17s. spent in the Bradlaugh and Besant case, and £106 spent. This left a deficiency of £237, but as the

judgment of reversal has swept away the old recognisances, the £400 has since been released. The account now stands :—

Total Subscriptions received to March 12th,	£1292	5	0
Total expenditure, Queen v. Bradlaugh and Besant,	£1065	0	0
Expenditure to date, Queen v. Truelove, still pending,	197	0	0
Expenditure to date in appeal against order of Mr Vaughan on Knowlton pamphlet,	12	10	0
	<hr/>		
		1274	10 0
Balance,	<hr/>		
		£17	15 0
	<hr/>		

It will be seen from the above financial statement that only the small balance of £17, 15s. was available for Mr Truelove's defence, although it was equally important with that of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant. And in the event of the removal of an indictment by *certiorari*, there is a rule of the Court that security for costs must be given; consequently, in the case of Mr Truelove, there was the fatal absence of money by which alone a *cause célèbre* can be maintained. The writ of *procedendo* (to remove the indictment back to the Central Criminal Court) was permitted to issue, and Edward Truelove was sacrificed in order that the dignity of the "chief" and "chiefess," who were then blindly worshipped by a party, which had on former occasions stood behind in bye-gone years, lending a helping hand to *real* martyrs who fought *real* struggles against *real* inquisitors—priests and politicians—who had prosecuted Woolstone, exiled Paine, robbed Shelley of his children, immured Carlile nine years in

l, and prosecuted and imprisoned some fifty men and

several women who had written, published, or sold the *Oracle of Reason*, or who had spoken, like Southwell and Holyoake, against the theological dogmas of the Christian religion.

Immediately after Mr Truelove had been sacrificed and imprisoned, Mr Bradlaugh conceived of another plan by which he managed to extract yet MORE money from the scanty earnings of his political and atheistic dupes. To keep his name prominently before the public, he commenced a series of petty skirmishes with the authorities, which were to him invaluable. From the beginning of his public career, his great ambition has been to obtain popularity—obtain it, has been his motto, honestly if you can, but if not, in whatsoever way you can. To be denounced by the press was, at least, an advertisement; to be ignored was, to him, ruinous.

Concurrent with the “appeals” to Middlesex magistrates for alleged illegal seizure of obscene books, and the appeal to the High Court against the conviction of the publication of the “Fruits,” the case of Besant *v.* Besant intervened. The scanty funds subscribed for the defence of Mr Truelove were encroached upon to meet this action, which was instituted by the Rev. Mr Besant against his wife (Annie Besant) for the custody of his daughter, upon the ground that the association of Mrs Besant with Mr Bradlaugh, and the advocacy of immoral doctrines, by Mrs Besant, as contained in the “Fruits of Philosophy,” rendered her morally unfit to train a girl in the principles of a virtuous life. Mr Besant did not

admire obscene pamphlets nor unmentionable instruments for preventing the necessity of procuring abortion. Possibly the Rev. Mr Besant forms a unit of that class who admire the intellect and the work of a Mrs Somerville and a George Elliot, but who abhor female discussion on such subjects as the Contagious Diseases Act, and who abjure the shrieking sisterhood when it emanates from the Salvation Army. Although an agreement had been entered into between Mr and Mrs Besant that the latter should retain their daughter, Mr Besant, on "Fruits of Philosophy" being published by Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, applied to the Master of the Rolls for the sole custody of his daughter. Instantly the cry went forth from the Old Street Dancing Academy—I beg pardon, the "Hall of Science"—that Mrs Besant was about to be robbed of the custody of her daughter. Affidavits were filed in opposition to Mr Besant, and the case of the poet Shelley cited, as well as the self-inflicted martyrdom of Byron, whose wife considered him to be an unfit person to have the custody of "Ada, sole daughter of my heart and name." But the women of England had little sympathy with the lady who preferred the friendship of Mr Bradlaugh to her legal husband, whom she had sworn to "love, honour, and obey." There was a special meeting of the "Defence Fund" (28th April), when it was decided that the expenses of Mrs Besant would be defrayed from the "Fund" subscribed for Mr Truelove's defence. The following resolution was passed:—

“The moneys subscribed to this Fund will be applied to conducting the defence of Edward Truelove ; to defraying the costs of Mr Bradlaugh’s present appeal on the Knowlton pamphlet ; and to enable Mrs Besant to defend the right of the custody of her daughter, and to carry the question, if need be, to the highest legal tribunal ”

In the case of Mr Truelove it was not necessary “to carry the case to the highest tribunal.” It was sufficient to carry it to the “lowest tribunal.” As a reason for Mr Truelove’s being unjustly dealt with by the “chief” and the “chiefess,” they can allege only that he served in the ranks of *their* party long before either of their names were connected with questionable literature and the Old Street “Hall of Science.”

En passant it may be incidentally remarked, that the question of the custody of Miss Besant was decided by the Master of the Rolls (Jessel), who, on Mrs Besant’s appearing in Court for the purpose of reciting some ornamental pleading which had, presumably, been previously prepared for her, told that lady that she would not do herself justice by arguing her cause in person. On her insisting on her rights she was informed that such facilities as are granted to those who are too poor to engage counsel, and who are ignorant of the practice of the courts, would not be extended to her. When the case was heard, Sir G. Jessel decided in favour of Mr Besant, and he spoke to the effect that, for the welfare of the child, it was necessary to remove her from the guardianship of a mother who would, from her association with an obscene book,

and the advocacy of immoral doctrines, find every decent drawing-room closed against her; and, consequently, it was only an act of common justice to her child to have her removed from associations which would of necessity corrupt and demoralise the mind of a young girl.

As soon as the "Fruits" trial was concluded, and the sale of the obscene pamphlet suppressed, Mrs Besant caused it to be publicly notified that Dr Knowlton's book was, physiologically, obsolete, and that she had written a work in substitution of it. Mrs Besant's work, which has commanded an immense sale, is disposed of at the office of the *National Reformer*, and in a few "refined" shops in Holywell and Wych Streets, where chaste persons can purchase, on payment of a fancy price, virtuous photos, and other unspeakable articles. A few practical proofs of demoralisation, arising out of the perusal of the class of "literature," from which Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant have realised thousands of pounds, may be gathered from the police reports of orgies which took place in one of the Secular Halls in Leeds, and which were indulged in by the Infidels of the Erotic School. The following is taken from the *Leeds Daily News* of 6th September and subsequent dates in 1878:—

"The Leeds Infidel Hall belongs to a company of shareholders, most of whom are Secularists—Infidels. The music licence was granted; but the detection of those scandalously lewd, vicious, and criminal orgies exposed the concern, and their licence was revoked by the magistrate at the trial, their own barrister, after hearing the evidence, first suggesting that it was clearly forfeited, and offering only to bow at once to that decision! They had held

several midnight orgies at the Infidel Lecture Hall aforesaid, and were preparing for another in that place, which had been 'let' and taken 'for the purpose,' during the night, August 30-1st, from ten to three o'clock. *No ladies* were to be admitted. A few 'ladies'—*i.e.*, common *prostitutes*—did get into the orgies; but it seems they were not welcome guests. Some of that class of women, seemingly, were the first to discover and denounce that scandalous — Society. It was superseding even their bad trade by something still worse. A 'bawdy and obscene book' was calculated 'to incite and encourage' men and women, old and young, to do as they liked licentiously and have no children! But this disgusting 'school' has 'developed' a stage past that—teaching the filthiest men to do also *without women!* (p. 21). They met frequently at certain places, some of them dressed in *women's clothes*, and (were) known among the filthy 'school' by *women's names*; and that a number of them were actually paired together, as '*George and his Fanny*,' etc. A letter was sent to the Chief Constable, with the intention of getting them stopped and the ring-leaders punished, who were seducing young men and boys for their abominable purposes (p. 20). The police, from an anonymous letter, got some vague idea that improper proceedings would be carried on; and Mr John Ward, Superintendent of Detective Police, an active and intelligent officer, proceeded to investigate the case. 'The police knew then, as others can now see, that the Infidels had gotten warning.' Thrown upon their own resources, the detectives, as is usual in such cases, arranged that certain persons should go to the hall that night, pay admission-money like others, but carefully observe what was going on; and, having seen and heard what they could, should come out and report to the officer of police, who had several of the force nigh at hand. Those witnesses, when coming out of the hole during the progress of the orgies, had given to them by Bancroft at the door the word 'Rachel,' to be used as the 'Open Sesame!' at the door when they returned. Their report of what was going on was such as determined the officer to make a raid into the hole at once, and he and his few men did so. They expected that improprieties might be carried on among dissolute men *and women* in holes and corners about the place, but were shocked to find that these horrible orgies were for purposes different, but not less vile and detestable. 'Why were they not all of them arrested upon the spot?' 'It was

impossible; it would have needed nearer forty policemen to have done that, than only about the four then present.' On Monday, September 2, 1878, in the Crown Court, Town Hall, Leeds, before the learned stipendiary magistrate, W. Bruce, Esq., Detective Superintendent Ward stated that, in consequence of information received, he, along with Detective-Sergeants Napp and Tinsley, and Detective Eddy, visited the North Street Lecture Hall about half-past twelve o'clock on the morning of the 31st ult. The door was fastened, but on making use of the password, 'Rachel,' the prisoner Bancroft admitted them. Upstairs in the hall they found about a hundred persons—three women and the rest men. A number, about twenty or more, of the men were dressed in females' clothes. There were two dressing-rooms, one on each side of the stage, and persons were going into and out of them. A man named Strong was present in charge of a box containing spirits—gin and whisky. He saw a large stone bottle, and also some glasses which had contained beer. Some of the men were only partially clothed, and one man, who was dancing in the middle of the room, had only a cloak and a girdle on. As he danced the cloak flew back and exposed his body. While dancing, one of the men dressed as a woman purposely fell, and a number of other men threw themselves upon him while on the ground, and indecent familiarities took place. During the dance the dancers kissed and conducted themselves indecently towards each other. The prisoner Pratt was in the room the whole of the time, and Bancroft came in occasionally. The prisoners were remanded until Thursday. Bail was applied for, but objected to, as the particulars of the case were too monstrous to admit of such a thing, and bail was not allowed. Pratt was sent to prison for one calendar month, and Bancroft was fined 60s. and costs."

If the foregoing Saturnalia is attributable to anything, we owe it to the dissemination of such works as the "Fruits of Philosophy," and the "Elements of Social Science." The Bradlaugh and Besant prosecution has, let us hope, finally put a stop to the worship of Priapus in this country. Whenever possible, Mr Bradlaugh and his business partner have conveniently ignored the sub-

ject; but, like Banquo's ghost, it cannot be laid. In the interests of those who repudiate with unutterable horror the debaucheries which naturally flow from the teachings of the vile book and pamphlet which have been so often praised by Mr Bradlaugh, it is necessary to quote what "Saladin," the editor of the *Secular Review*, has written in reply to a defence put forward by a Mr Symes, a curate of Mr Bradlaugh, and who endeavoured, through the medium of a pamphlet, to rescue the reputation of the "Dirtites" from the aspersions hurled against it by the Leeds newspapers. In the *Secular Review* of 26th June 1886, "Saladin" wrote:—

"On the unspeakably obscene character of the orgies of the Leeds Branch of the National Secular Society there has never been the expression of two opinions. So revoltingly filthy was the Secular Hole Pandemonium, that when the barrister of the orgiists learnt the character of the offence charged against those for whom he had to plead, he threw up his brief in horror. The solicitor likewise abandoned his unsavoury clients in disgust. Moreover, the magistrate remanded the prisoners, bail not being allowed, as the 'particulars of the case were too monstrous to admit of such a thing.' There is one Joseph Symes, a vice-President of the National Secular Society. (By-the-bye, it is a great honour to be a vice-President of the National Secular Society, especially since one or two of the vice-Presidents can hardly spell their own names, such learned and illustrious *Freethinkers* are they!) Well, this Joseph Symes has a fine nose for the nasty. He is at present responsible for a rag at the Antipodes that the post-office and other decent authorities are attempting to suppress as *obscene*. Joseph Symes went about hysterically and foaming at the mouth as the spokesman and defender of the Secular Saints who had indulged themselves *à la mode* the City of the Plain. And yet, in a crazy and vulgar pamphlet which he issued, the champion of Dirt wrote: 'The scandal is one of the gravest nature. . . . The promoters of the meeting. . . .

'Fancy dress ball and those at it, are a disgrace to humanity; the hypocrites and pious scoundrels. . . . infamously committed the vile deeds. . . . unmentionable crimes and inhuman villanies.' Even Mr Symes could not deny the ineffable prurience of the 'entertainment;' but he contended that the culprits were not the Infidels, but the Christians, whom he politely refers to as 'hypocrites and pious scoundrels.' Let us see how much the Christians had to do with the matter. Stead, the tailor, who let the hall, was a member of the National Secular Society. Pratt, to whom he let it for his 'benefit,' was ditto, and to the nude dancers he sold, in the hall, the whisky without a licence. Low Infidelity is always execrably low; the Secular hall at Leeds is not by any means the only one which has been used as an unlicensed public-house. Bancroft was also a Secularist. These three worthies alone seem to have been responsible for the origin and conduct of the 'entertainment.' Where do the Christians, the 'hypocrites and pious scoundrels,' come in? We are no Christian; but the zeal of partisanship shall never blind us to the claims of truth and justice, and we assert that the Christians had nothing whatever to do with the matter. To say, as has been said, that Stead and Pratt and Bancroft (poor innocent creatures!) did not know the vile purpose for which they had let the hall is simply a lie. While the infamies were being enacted they looked after their rent, kept the door, sold the beer, and protested not. Moreover, they had had previous experience of the same thing. *This was not by any means the first time the hall had been let for 'entertainments' à la mode the City of the Plain. When the attention of the two editors of our contemporary was drawn to the matter, they did not dare to denounce and repudiate it. They attempted to evade and ignore it. They were content to miss this splendid opportunity of exposing the frightful licentiousness of those whom their friend Mr Symes alleged to be Christians! They simply referred in the most vague way to 'coarse' attacks. Any statement that is unpleasant to these two worthies is sure to be 'coarse' or 'foul-mouthed,' or 'brutal,' or something of that sort, they being so gentle and cultured and refined!*

"We have much more to say on this subject, being thoroughly in possession of the facts: but we would rather say no more, and duty demanded that we should say no less. But let the provocation come, and we shall make still uglier revelations as to Leeds than we have yet done, and prove that that of Leeds does not stand alone

among the Secular Holes which have Iconoclast* for their President and the 'Elements' for their Bible."

The Leeds orgies is the legitimate outcome of the "morality" taught by Mr Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs Annie Besant. Mr Bradlaugh, however, is as careful to avoid advocating the teachings of the "Elements" in his seat in Parliament as he is to abstain from the responsibility of leading his political dupes to Trafalgar Square, when he well knows that a resolute government would at once prosecute him if he dared to carry his political theories, or what were his political theories, into practice. In November 1887 the honourable member for Northampton took good care to be absent when his courage might have been put to the test by the Socialists who were anxious to congregate, in defiance of Sir Charles Warren's Manifesto, in Trafalgar Square. Mr Bradlaugh, in answer to his admirers who wished him to "lead the way," relied on the flimsy excuse that he would be engaged on a lecturing tour, and that on the particular Sunday in question he would be lecturing in Hull. He could not forego his Hull engagement by sending his business partner in his stead, as he had, on a former occasion sent her to deliver a lecture when he found more important and interesting employment in watching his interests at the Turberville inquest. Very possibly it escaped the memory of Mr Bradlaugh that when in America, he, on hearing of the dissolution of Parliament, instantly threw up his lecturing engage-

* Mr Bradlaugh is President of the National Secular Society.

ments and re-crossed the Atlantic in pursuit of his own political interests. It was, of course, an easy matter to send a telegram from Hull to London deploring the action of Sir Charles Warren, and to write an article to tell the demonstrators that he would take care the subject should be discussed in Parliament. But the fact was alike patent to the *Conservative Standard* and the Republican *Reynolds's Newspaper*, that Mr Bradlaugh's tongue had been held to bail by the promised reversion of a place in a Liberal Cabinet; and the work which he is deputed to accomplish as the price of his promotion is that of carrying out the behest of Mr Gladstone's Whips, to whom he is now as obedient as a properly broken spaniel. The change of front was first noticed by the Socialists, who justly estimated the soundness or want of soundness of his political consistency or inconsistency. But Mr Bradlaugh professes to ignore those extreme politicians, while he whines at the exposures he so constantly receives from the free-lances who direct the political columns of *Reynolds*. Well does he know that *Reynolds* is read by the followers of St Crispin, who can influence the electorate of Northampton, and he relies upon a clever but discreditable arrangement with Mrs Besant, whom he uses as a buffer to keep the leading Socialists from openly attacking his position; and since the Christian editor (Mr Stead) of the *Pall Mall Gazette* has described this Lady as "*that great and good woman*" (so "good," by the way, that she recommends to her sex chemical mixtures and syringes

for purposes which are not, after his late midnight gyrations, unknown to Mr Stead) the honourable member for Northampton ought to be able to steer his political barque till he reaches the long-desired haven, where quarterly salaries are paid punctually to renegade patriots from the Consolidated Fund; and, possibly, *when* "Iconoclast" blossoms into the Right Honourable Sir Charles Bradlaugh, and *when* he draws his official salary he may relinquish the dirty money representing the profits which accrued from the sale of books which are the standard works in the library of every brothel.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr Bradlaugh becomes jealous of Mr Foote's Popularity—Determines to crush Mr Foote at the Leeds Conference of 1876—"B. V.'s" Criticism on the Conduct of Mr Bradlaugh at the Conference—Freethinkers utterly disgusted with His Ungovernable Temper—Letter of Mr Robert White to The Secularist of 17th June 1876, reflecting upon Bradlaugh's Vulgar Behaviour and Tyrannical Conduct at the Conference—A Letter from Mr Foote to Mr Bradlaugh alleging that the latter is Mean, Ignoble, Malicious, Slandrous, Unscrupulous, etc.—Wind-up of the Conference.

MR FOOTE is the editor of the *Freethinker*. He is a gentleman who carries into practice the dictum of the freethinking Lord Shaftsbury, the author of the *Characteristics*, that "Ridicule is the test of Truth." Thomas Woolstone in his "Discourses on the Miracles" first put the apothegm into practice amongst scholars, and Thomas Paine carried the principle out to its fullest extent in strong, logical reasoning. Nearer our own age, Charles Southwell shocked our fathers with his irreverent comments on Scripture, and at the end of another generation G. W. Foote followed *his* record, and met the fate which attends the wanton outrage of honest convictions. In 1876, Mr Foote had not graduated in what the Christians call "pictorial blasphemy." He was then, as now, an earnest worker in the Secularist cause. With more than

the average abilities of an aggressive speaker, he took fair rank as a polemic debater, and sought fame on the same plane which has gained reputation for Mr Bradlaugh. Had Mr Foote been a docile valet to his leader, and had he solicited his patronage, he might have formed the fourth person in the Atheistic Quaternion. He had youth, ability, ambition, and boundless energy on his side. He far surpassed Mr Charles Watts in intellect, and if he had not the imposing presence of Mr Bradlaugh, to forward his mission, he had a character for hard-hitting, while he secured the respect of his Christian opponents. He had, however, one fatal gift which caused him infinite trouble, and it led to endless difficulties with his party. He possessed that peculiar spirit which Mr Holyoake lacked, and which was but slowly developed in Charles Watts. He was independent, and absolutely fearless in confronting the leader of the Party. He had the courage to go his own way, and when he disapproved of the policy of Mr Bradlaugh he openly opposed it. He committed a grave offence. He acquired popularity amongst Freethinkers almost equal to the "chief." It was necessary to shelve him; for, by the audacity of youth, Mr Bradlaugh might find himself superseded. When those elements of division existed it did not require much opposition to cause a division in the Secular ranks. It was fifteen years since Joseph Barker had been extinguished. During this period, every other Secular aspirant had been driven out of the party, or permitted to remain on the implied condition of obeying the "chief."

Mrs Harriet Law had been a popular advocate who fought like Hal o' the Wynd for her own hand. She had a good following till she was ignored. Mrs Besant had come on the scene, and there was not room for two ladies as Secularist advocates. Mr Foote seems to have incurred the displeasure of Mrs Besant, and as one of the Vice-Presidents of the National Secular Society he had become obnoxious to the President. Jealousy of the growing reputation of Mr Foote might have been forgiven in a woman, but Mr Foote's popularity was fatal to good relations at the presidential board. There was to be a Conference of the National Secular Society at Leeds, and the President determined to arraign his colleague before the delegates who were there assembled. It must be understood that the National Secular Society is supposed to be the inner arcana of Freethought, and no one is capable of initiation unless on the implied condition of recognising Mr Bradlaugh as the leader of the party. But the society bears only the same relation to Freethought that communicants do to the congregation of the Church of England. For every enrolled member, there are at least fifty more prominent Freethinkers who do not admit the necessity of organisation, but who are always eady to fight when required. At this conference Mr Bradlaugh determined to crush Mr Foote by refusing to recognise any voting power except that proceeding from his nominees. In a report of this Leeds Conference, penned by a singularly brilliant writer, "B. V." * who,

* James Thomson, author of "The City of Dreadful Night," etc.

for several years "devilled" for Mr Bradlaugh, and provided him with whatever material which might be necessary to meet his antagonists on the platform, and in the press. "B. V." wrote as follows:—

"The Conference or Annual Meeting of the Society, calling itself the National Secular Society, was highly noteworthy from a business point of view. The report was the president's, not the executive's, and was read by the president, not by the secretary. This report was mainly concerned with congratulating the National Secular Society on the good work of other people, not only in Britain, but also in Italy, India, Australia, Japan, and America. The society, however, through its plenipotential executive, had done certain remarkable things. It had generously charged itself with the labour and expense of getting up a petition against royal grants; an object, be it observed, quite beyond and apart from the distinctive scope of the society. This petition, after being hawked about the country for the greater part of a year, pushed by agents in most towns and districts, had gathered the astonishing number of 104,033 signatures, including those obtained after lectures, and those constrained by the imperious threatenings of Mr Bradlaugh. As the petition was really a sensible one, it would most likely have attracted half-a-million signatures in a month if started by any reputable and influential politician. The society, always through its executive, had, moreover, authorised a *Secular Song and Hymn Book*, several *Tracts* and a *Text Book*, of which three numbers had already been issued. The report was received with cheers, but no resolution was moved for its adoption, it being probably considered an imperial manifesto not to be subjected to the indignity of a popular vote.

"After the report came the balance-sheet, also read by the president, who appealed to the honour of the reporters to consider it private until the delegates and members present decided as to its publication, and then appealed to these not to have it published, as it might be seized on by their adversaries as a proof of apparent weakness. But could any weakness be more real? The society resolved, as at the last conference, that its balance-sheet *should not be exposed to the eyes of the profane, and rejected a pro-*

posal to send a printed copy to every member, the president pertinently asking, Where will you get the money to do it?

“The great Christian societies, in their annual meetings, publish exact and detailed reports of the numbers of their ministers, missionaries, teachers, agents, communicants, scholars, stations, chapels, schools, etc., of the number of copies of books and tracts circulated, and of the receipts and expenditure. Their publications are really theirs, paid for out of their own funds, sold when sold for their own profit. The National Secular Society, in lofty contempt of such Christian examples, applauds without question or comment a presidential report, which gives no information whatever as to the affiliated societies, or the number of its members, allows itself to be burdened with the *responsibility of books which it has not examined, and which are published by some of its officials for their own profit*, and decided to keep its balance-sheet dark, the same being not to bear the light. The *Hymn Book* and the beginning of the *Text Book* have been severely criticised; not a word is hazarded in their defence. Very natural curiosity has been expressed as to the amount of consideration they received from the executive, the number of meetings at which they were discussed, the number and names of the persons at such meetings; not an atom of information is furnished on these points; no minutes of these important meetings are produced. Mr Foote charged that three or four persons in London could saddle with the responsibility of whatever they chose to do, and this was not denied. A balance-sheet is read, showing the society to have expended about twice its income, and to be heavily indebted to the president, who in his turn avowed himself indebted for the amount to the treasurer; and the larger part of this excess (over £35, as stated by Mr Bradlaugh in last week's *National Reformer*) is for the petition against royal grants, a matter with which the society, as a society, has nothing whatever to do; yet not a question is raised on this statement of accounts, not a suggestion put forward as to balancing expenditure and income. ‘The balance-sheet was passed amid applause,’ says Mr Bradlaugh's paper; it is so gratifying to this society to learn that double its income has been spent for it by its irresponsible executive. In fact, this state of things shows so much prosperity that the society afterwards authorised the executive to appoint a paid secretary, if it pleased, although too impoverished to send copies of the balance-sheet to its members.

"The president, not in his report, incidentally stated the number of members at 1192, a total so enormous that it must strike terror into the slaves of superstition, a total which would make a good audience at the Hall of Science, or a fair congregation for a Dissenting minister in a country town. It is true that I could by no means reconcile this vast total with the numbers of subscribers given in the balance-sheet; but the report in the president's paper tells us what I did not hear the president tell the meeting, that 'if all members paid up their subscriptions there would be money in hand.' If this is correct a large portion of the members must be in arrear, for the deficit is very large in proportion to the income. As non-paying members are but an incumbrance to the society, it would be interesting to know how many must be deducted from the formidable total of 1192 in order to arrive at the efficient strength. And even this amount would include those who joined the Society simply to attempt its reconstruction, and who will resign if it remains as it is. So far as I could learn, no distinction was made in the voting between members who had paid and members in default. By-the-by, as the only authentic record of the life of a society consists in its minute book, it may be that there is no authority extant for either hymn book, text book, or petition, since the president, in asking power to appoint a paid secretary, said that complaints had been made that the minutes were not kept. Moreover, as it has been held that when no quorum is specified, a meeting is only valid when composed of all the members of any corporate administration, and as no quorum has been specified for the executive, and the full number has never been present at any meeting, it is more than doubtful whether any of its meetings had power to do anything in the name of the society. On the whole, the business-like procedure of the meeting, the shy balance-sheet with its flourishing deficit, the huge roll of members, must have filled with envy and longing the hearts of the Freethinkers present who had not joined the National Secular Society.

"Such envy and longing could not but be increased by the subsequent proceedings. It was proposed to postpone the election of officers until the society had been reconstituted. The president boldly declared that the revision of the constitution had no more to do with the election of officers than the price of salt, in face of the obvious fact that the revised constitution might appoint an execu-

tive very different in powers, and numbers, and organisation from the old. The president, likewise, who tried hard to do everything himself, with the slightest and merely formal assistance of the rest of the meeting, proclaimed that the executive appointed at one conference had power to lay down a programme for the next conference, from which it would have no power to swerve; and said that, if this were objected to, the conference could vote that the executive should not have such power in future. In other words, he told the National Secular Society that it is absolutely governed by its own executive, which, being absolutely governed by himself, the president, the constitution is as wide and satisfactory as Charles Bradlaugh can wish. This new discovery in the delegation of power, by which the delegate has authority, not simply to do all that he is expressly appointed to do, but all from which he is not expressly restrained, is a great achievement of genius, which, if consistently applied, will revolutionise all government and business. According to it, if you give a man a power of attorney to act for you in a certain matter, he is thereby further empowered to turn you out of your own house, and take possession of your property, unless explicitly interdicted beforehand from doing so. The National Secular Society, with that capacity for business which marked it throughout, resolved to elect its officers, *i.e.*, its absolute masters for a year to come, before considering its own reconstruction, and with admirable submission to these masters and their supreme lord, the president did not make the slightest effort to limit their despotic powers, or its complete subservience. So noble and indomitable is the spirit of Freethought when thoroughly disciplined in the school of Mr Bradlaugh.

“Mr Bradlaugh, having been re-elected president, favoured his subjects with a royal address. He expressed the hope—he generally does whenever he has a chance—that he would soon represent them in another assembly, though why such a Caesar should prefer being one of the most insignificant among 680 in our National Palaver to being the sole dictator of his National Secular Society, it is not easy to discover. He said: ‘I ask you, whatever you may do, to try and give me an executive that will work with me, because an executive who do not work with me will be utterly useless to me.’ Nothing could be more frank; the desired council is one useful to the president, whether useful to the society is

a matter of small importance. He went on: 'It has been said, and said very truly, that I am a little overbearing in the way I use the power you give me. If I had not, I ask, where would your movement be?' Although the president himself admits its truth, I must call it a monstrous slander to say that he is a *little* overbearing; in overbearing, as in other things, he is never little, but always lavish, regardless of cost. If he had not been overbearing, where would the movement be? Surely very much in advance of where it is now. Instead of general dissatisfaction and disorganisation there might have been orderly and amicable working; instead of a National Secular Society of 1192, including members in default, we might have had one numbering 50,000; instead of a *Hymn Book* and *Text Book*, which all impartial and intelligent Freethinkers will repudiate with scorn, we might have had books of which all would have been proud; instead of a balance-sheet so paltry that we are ashamed to publish it, we might have had one which would have commanded the respect of our opponents. Where would our movement have been? he asks! I ask, where *is* our movement as represented by the National Secular Society and its executive?

"Then came the election of vice-presidents. . .

"Followed the interlude of Mr Foote's nomination and rejection. In this the president played brilliantly his part of infallible Pope and absolute autocrat. Mr Foote had been guilty of high treason in publishing criticisms on the acts and speeches and writings of Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant, and in proposing reforms in the constitution of the society. But Mr Bradlaugh preferred not to meet him on these public grounds; it was much easier and more prudent to exaggerate certain petty personal details into monstrous dimensions. Instead of vacating the chair while engaged in personal conflict with Mr Foote, so that an impartial person might have presided over the terrible fray, he stuck to his post, using and abusing all its advantages with the utmost violence. He was accuser, witness, inquisitor, judge, all in one. He was a king of France of that *ancien régime* he denounces with pen and tongue, holding a bed of justice; he was Judge Jefferies trying a rebel. He continually interrupted Mr Foote with an insolence and an arrogance equally disgraceful and ludicrous. When Mr Foote wanted to reply to statements made after his first speech, the dictator decreed, 'I don't allow you to

‘speak again.’ He coerced his society with the lofty threat echoed by Mrs Besant, ‘If you choose Mr Foote, I resign.’ The result of this admirably fair trial was that, including proxies, and after exertions dating from the New Year, Mr Bradlaugh was able to command 377 votes against Mr Foote, being rather fewer than one-third the total number of Mr Bradlaugh’s society. Of course Freethinkers not of the society could not vote, and these, by the very fact of their not joining, show that they are not content to come under the Bradlaughian denomination.

“Thus was Mr Foote righteously punished for rebellion against the autocrat; thus did the great society, sorely constrained by its ruthless master, expel the foolish young man who had been strenuously trying to convert it from an impotent sham into a potent reality.”

The account of this conference in the *National Reformer* is full of heroics as to the position of Secularism, and the prospects of the Party; but the malcontents who had dethroned Christ refused to place Mr Bradlaugh in his stead. The authority assumed by the president was resisted, while his ungovernable temper disgusted those who cared more for the cause than they did for its advocates. When Mr Bradlaugh thundered forth his edicts, and said he “would nail down” the words of his colleague, the conference found that it had got a master, and not a servant. When he used the epithet that his opponent was a “liar,” the members were indignant at his conduct, and that hour saw the last vestige of even apparent unity in the Secular ranks. A gentleman who was present, Mr Robert White, Stalybridge, wrote a letter which contains a prophetic reference to Mr Bradlaugh’s episode at the Speaker’s table some six years afterwards, which shows how that celebrated scene of the “Oath-

taking" had been rehearsed for years prior to its taking place, and affords confirmation of what Mr Bradlaugh has so frequently said he would accomplish when setting his foot on the "rung of the ladder" of a Radical Cabinet. he would, following the precedent of Danton, if not of Cromwell, get himself declared first President of the British Republic. It appears in the reference to an anonymous statement made at or before that conference in the form of a query, "Who would have taken his place before the 'Speaker's chair' in the House of Commons?" I refer my readers to the following portion of a letter by Mr White, in the *Secularist* of June 17th, 1876, who was complaining of Mr Bradlaugh's treatment of Mr Foote :—

LEEDS CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the *Secularist*.

"SIR,—The following is among the rough notes of the *National Reformer* of June 11th. 'We have had a good deal of stray talk lately at district conferences and smaller meetings, not to speak of private letters as to the crushing onslaught which was to be made at the conference on the society's hymn book, and we believe a few vials of wrath were to be poured on our own head by some non-angelic opponents, on account of the text book, so far as it has gone.' If the writer of the above really heard what is there stated, it must have been from some person who is far more eager to tell Mr Bradlaugh what societies have done, or ought to have done, than take part in any work himself, and whose desire is far keener to fill a large chair when the president of the National Secular Society is near, than to speak the truth about district conferences.

"There were two resolutions passed at the last quarterly conference of the Manchester and District Secular Union, which have

appeared in this paper, and were to have been read at the Leeds Conference; but owing to the disgraceful attack of the president of the National Secular Society upon Mr Foote, by which he wanted to 'nail him down,' and in which he roared out so fiercely the word 'liar,' there was no opportunity to introduce both resolutions, as half the time of the conference, or nearly so, was occupied with this shameful occurrence. It is utterly untrue that there was talk at our district conference of making an onslaught either on the society's hymn book or text book. It was resolved to ignore the society's hymn book and have a new one compiled either by the National Secular Society, or by our Union in conjunction with the Yorkshire Lecturing Circuit. Although many have bought the parts that are out of the text book, few have read them, as they are as dry as bread without butter, and as uninviting as oatmeal porridge without milk. Consequently there was very little talk at our 'District Conference or smaller meetings, or in our private letters,' about the text book. Mr Tyson was on his feet twice to bring forward the proposition about the hymn book, but unfortunately the last time he got up, Mr Holyoake happened to move in his chair; this was sufficient to make the president cry out, 'Mr Holyoake will address the meeting.'

"It was really sickening to see how Mr Bradlaugh fawned on Mr Holyoake, and it was disgusting to witness how he treated others who proposed or said anything he did not like. Many who honoured and loved Mr Bradlaugh before the Leeds Conference have now, on account of his tyrannical conduct, lost all respect for him.

"He allowed Mr Tyson to vote for his own election as president of the National Secular Society; but when he was going to vote for Mr Foote's election, he was told by Mr Bradlaugh that he could not vote because he was 'not a member of the National Secular Society.' Either Mr Bradlaugh knew, or might have known, that this statement was false. Mr Tyson's name appeared in the official organ of the National Secular Society—the *National Reformer* of April 30th—as a member of that society. Except he knew that Mr Tyson was *not* a member, he ought not to have said so; if he knew he was a member the case is still worse. I hope Mr Bradlaugh will not condemn Mr Foote for anything that is in this letter, as I am responsible for all it contains. Doubtless he will be much displeased with it, and call it personal, forgetting that he generally commences the attack in the *diseased* organ of the National Secular

Society, and then refuses the right of reply, which I have not given him the opportunity to do.

"Instead of wasting the time of the conference, why could not Mr Bradlaugh have arranged to have a select committee—say six of his, and six of Mr Foote's friends—to settle the dispute? But no, a quiet settlement was not to be entertained; he must completely annihilate Mr Foote, and if the members of the N. S. S. persisted in electing 'this young man,' he would give back his trust. If Mr Bradlaugh had done this, into what a state of confusion the affairs of the Secular party and of the whole world would have been thrown for the next thousand years! *Who would have taken his place before the 'Speaker's chair' in the House of Commons?*

"I never read nor heard of a conference like that which was held in Leeds, on June 4th. I believe it stands alone in the annals of the world. As I sat and watched Mr Bradlaugh use his iron hammer with such vigour, I thought he would have made a more mighty blacksmith than Wat Tyler himself.

"It is not surprising that men like Joseph Barker, Dr Sexton, and Bishop should leave the party rather than be bullied as Mr Foote was. Better far be bound down by superstition than have the name and not the reality of freedom.

"Many persons, I had almost said Secularists, look upon criticising the words, actions, or conduct of Mr Bradlaugh as an unpardonable sin. They look upon him as being above criticism. These persons are not Secularists; they are Bradlaughites. They give up the worship of a Spiritual God for that of a man. They condemn kings and priests, but support tyranny and dogmatism. I urge upon all true Secularists the advisability, nay, the necessity of preventing one man from riding upon the shoulders of the party, to gain his own ambitious ends; and of upholding the right to differ in matters of opinion, the right to criticise in matters of importance, and the right of speaking out when occasion demands it.—Yours truly,

ROBERT WHITE,

*"Secretary of the Manchester and District Secular Union,
"Spring Bank, Heyrod, Stalybridge."*

The president achieved his object. He expelled his youthful rival, who (after he had tried to stand on his own feet, but found he could not) has repaid his tyranny

with support, and has held his position as becomes a valiant soldier fighting an unpopular foe. Defeated, he was not disgraced, and the rejoinder he made is worthy of notice. In a letter to the Editor of the *National Reformer*, Mr Foote said:—

“The long-expected conference of the National Secular Society has come and gone. Hundreds of Freethinkers spent time and money to attend its sessions, instead of availing themselves of the holiday occasion to leave the smoke and filth of great towns for a breath of fresh air and a glimpse of Nature’s beauty. And what has resulted from this self-denial and devotion? Has the Secular party been solidified? Have old animosities been allayed by judicious concessions and courteous demeanour? Has the pain of old and festering wounds been mitigated by a timely application of healing balm? Have dissensions been removed or the causes of them in anywise counteracted by unifying influences? To these questions but one reply is possible, and absolute and peremptory, NO. The result of the conference is that you are again made the despotic master of the society which calls itself National; that you have as your practical executive a few persons nominated by yourself, and whose wills are therefore not likely ever to clash with yours, and that you have succeeded in procuring the expulsion from office of the only vice-president who manifested independence of opinion and a desire to make the society in reality what it is, at present but in name. This result is doubtless gratifying to yourself; indeed, I have heard from more than one of your friends that your present ease and contentment contrast strongly with the feverish anxiety which marked your bearing before the conference gave you another twelve months’ lease of power; but not even the most microscopic and hopeful vision can detect any result that might gratify those who share not your lust of rule, and who would fain see the Secular party united and organised for national and rational purposes.

“The means by which you reached this end would have been dishonourable in a private man, and are doubly dishonourable in a professed leader of the party of progress and a preacher of a new moral faith. Not content with doing your utmost, and persuading or commanding your friends and servants to do their utmost, ever

since your last return from America, to injure my reputation and diminish my influence, you have condescended to a still lower depth of meanness. My criticisms on your public acts and utterances have all been publicly made; I have never crawled slanderously behind your back and praised you to your face, as do some of those whom you fondly imagine to be your friends, because they find profit in ministering to your vanity. But, regardless of this, you stooped to a mean and disgraceful use of ignoble weapons of attack, and assailed me and my friends personally, instead of meeting us on public grounds; and this you did while hypocritically protesting your devotion to liberty and justice. Not even this, however, was sufficient to satisfy your inordinate love of unquestioned power. After stimulating the passions and prejudices of your friends at the conference by an artful appeal to the lowest part of their nature, and a use of language which even Dr Kenealy in his wildest paroxysms of malice would disavow; after accusing me of treason against your sovereign majesty, and terrorising your dutiful subjects by the threat that you would resign if I were re-elected; after brutally interrupting me in the midst of my defence whenever my remarks weighed heavily against you; after fulfilling in your own person the functions of accuser, advocate, witness, judge, and jury, and meanly occupying the chair while your own case was being tried; after permitting further witnesses to be called for the prosecution when my defence was completed and the mouths of my supporters were stopped; after all this, you deliberately proceeded to rule the voting in your own interest by admitting without question all votes in your favour and rejecting without justice a large number in mine. One delegate you allowed to vote for your election as president, and refused him, on technical grounds, the right to vote again for my election as vice-president. Another delegate you denied the right to vote, on the ground that he was not properly qualified, although you had published his name as a member weeks before in your own paper. And a third, whose votes you refused because of some informality in the signing of proxies, was so incensed that he cried out to your face that his society had been 'dodged out of its votes.' Every one of these delegates whose rights you set aside would have voted for me, and you knew it. A just man, an honourable man, would, in such circumstances, have strained every point in his opponent's favour instead of in his own. You strained every point in your own favour, and I leave you to

draw the obvious and inevitable conclusion. The voting, as recorded in your own paper, stands thus: For Mr Foote's re-election, 51, against 292, not including the 85 proxies providentially brought by your friend Mr Watts, and which you generously requested him not to use as soon as you found that a favourable majority would be otherwise obtained. The number of votes that would have been recorded in my favour, had you not thus ungenerously, nay, basely interfered, is 184, exclusive of the Stalybridge votes, of which I have not yet discovered the precise number.

"But after all, this vote was not so much a vote *against* me as *for* you. You plainly told the members of your society that they must choose between you and me, and they doubtless surmised that Mrs Besant and Mr Watts would cast in their lots with their 'chief.' As the case stood, the wonder is, not that I obtained a minority of votes, but that I obtained any votes at all. Never before did so many Secularists virtually inform Charles Bradlaugh that he might go to Jericho if he would not work with others whom they approved. Your dynasty must be weaker than you thought. Perhaps your temporary and dearly-bought victory at the Leeds Conference in more than one respect resembles the last victorious plebiscite of Napoleon the Little, which was so soon followed by the crowning disaster of Sedan.

"Your malicious slander cast against my dearest friend, I was blamed for not repudiating; but in truth I dared not trust myself to speak of it. It was characterised by some of your own supporters as 'brutal,' seeing that the mouth of the slandered man was stopped. My friend may be left to make his own defence, and to inflict upon you, as he assuredly will, condign retribution. When last he and you met, you respected him sufficiently to proffer your hand, but he disrespected you sufficiently to decline it. His name will live when yours is forgotten; his memory be treasured when yours has fled. I would rather touch his hand dead than yours living; and I, and those who love and honour him, shall love and honour him the more since your reviling has supremely attested his worth.*

"Your fulsome fawning on Mr Holyoake at the conference was too transparent to deceive those gifted with sight. Methought your friendship did protest too much. You declared that you and

* Mr Foote here refers to James Thomson, "B. V."

he had knit hands till death, but I recollect that you said almost exactly the same thing fifteen years ago. Your threatening letters to Mr Holyoake before his withdrawal from this paper, demanding an interview within forty-eight hours, are sufficient proof of the hollowness of this truce which is called friendship. Mr Holyoake falls a victim to your machinations, because age and infirmities have weakened his power of resistance. He has abdicated his former proud position, and accepted a lieutenancy under a general whose plans he disapproved and persistently deprecated in his days of mature strength. Your strategy may be admirable, but you can scarcely expect us to believe that it was guided by love.

"I have called your victory at the Leeds Conference temporary and dearly bought, and such you will find it. You have demonstrated what I had asserted, that the Society which calls itself National represents but a small section of the great body of Free-thinkers, is, in fact, but an insignificant band pledged to work and shout for you. There are worthy men amongst its members, I admit, and these will in time free themselves from present delusions; the rest may follow where you lead. Independence under your leadership is proved to be impossible; the democratic profession of your lips is belied by your habitual practice. This, many who admired and respected you before you fully revealed yourself at Leeds, have been reluctantly and painfully compelled to admit; and their admission will bear fruit. Already societies whose delegates and whose sense of honour you outraged at the conference are preparing to withdraw from the National Secular Society, and to prosecute their own especial work independently of you and your society. They may wait to see if the new committee will produce good, as there are three members of it, Mr Gimson, Mr Cooper, and Mr Slater, fairly representative of outside opinion. But if this committee produce no good, as from its first report there is reason to fear, you may depend on seeing another National Association instituted, which will almost certainly exceed the present in strength and usefulness, and which quite certainly could not be inferior in either of those qualities.

"Your twelve years' acknowledged leadership of the Secular party has proved your utter incapacity or unwillingness to organise it for practical purposes. Every small measure of organisation that we now possess has been achieved without your advice or instigation. What single scheme for the good of the whole

cause, for its solidification and homogeneity, have you ever originated? What scheme have you ever assisted, except so far and in such ways as ministered to your own profit and aggrandisement? Our party is less organised now than when you assumed its leadership; mushroom societies are constantly springing up, but what account can you give of the old ones? The very Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, of which you make such boast whenever occasion offers, was stronger in Joseph Barker's time than now. What Secular Society is there in London where you have a platform always open, and where you, or such persons as you permit, lecture every Sunday to hundreds of people? Where is Secularism to be found, as an organised thing, in Northampton, which you aspire to represent in Parliament, and where presumably your influence is most potent? How have you promoted the building of Secular Halls, in order that our party might assemble weekly in decent places like the poorest Christian sect? Where is our literature? You cannot say there are no purchasers, for you trumpet their numbers every week. What books have we to compare with those which issued from the Freethought press in the days of Robert Owen, Richard Carlile, Thomas and Robert Cooper, Joseph Barker, and G. J. Holyoake? Your last presidential address makes mention of but two, both of which will probably at no distant date be either used as waste paper or preserved as curiosities. And what has your great society done during the past twelve months? It has procured signatures for a petition against royal grants, which is not strictly appropriate to a National Secular Society; issued six tracts, and presented a testimonial to brave Mr Washington, in the form of a teapot, on which are conspicuously engraved your name and the names of two of your vice-presidents, selected for immortalisation. This is all, and what an all for a great National Society!

"The present state of our party is a practical condemnation of your leadership, and your recent triumph will not serve to conceal this. In a private correspondence between us last summer I told you that you were subordinating every thing to a mistaken view of your own best interests, suppressing men of independence and ability, and playing with the Secular party as Napoleon the Little played with the French Democracy. I repeat this now with increased emphasis. Your policy and the progress of Secularism are incompatible. You may still retrieve your reputation as a leader

if you will be wise in time. If you will not, my retribution will surely come without further personal struggle. Henceforth I resolve to ignore you and to labour solely for the effective organisation of Secularism. When our party is strong enough to manage its own affairs, to decide its own policy and choose those who shall execute it, and to repel insolent dictation; then will my vengeance be completed. The greatest blow I can strike against you is to strive to make our party too powerful and proud to submit to your tyranny."

Thus ended the Leeds Conference by a disruption of the Secularists. It was the signal for the breaking up of the organisation. From that hour the harmony of the party was at an end. Those who remained were pure and undefiled Bradlaughites. They were no longer members of a party; they were followers of a "leader"—the "chief," Charles Bradlaugh. Mr Charles Watts had been used as the tool to overthrow Mr Foote. Within a year, he was himself spurned as an outcast because he refused to go to prison in order to give *eclat* to the "chief" and the "chiefess." The subjects protested against by the members of the conference were the unauthorised adoption and publication of books which committed the party to opinions against which the majority revolted. Mr Bradlaugh succeeded. Nemesis followed speedily in his track, and the prosecution of the "Fruits of Philosophy" completed what the Leeds Conference of 1876 inaugurated.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr Bradlaugh and the Press—Working up Lawsuits against the Press—How His Early Lawsuits were conducted—His Sham Attack against the YORKSHIRE POST and a Hull Newspaper—Contesting East Finsbury—His Action against the CLERKENWELL CHRONICLE—Resigned His East Finsbury Candidature—How He proceeded against the CLERKENWELL CHRONICLE—The Material Parts of the “Statements of Claim”—Interrogatories administered to Mr Bradlaugh—He failed to answer Them—A Hostile Biographical Sketch of Mr Bradlaugh published in the BEACONSFIELD STANDARD—A Withdrawal, an Apology, and £50 demanded—His Demands slighted, His Letter published along with a more scathing Biographical Sketch—Mr Bradlaugh has always been afraid to fight a Stalwart Foe—His Action against the Rev. Brewin Grant—Mr Grant’s Preparations for the Fight—The Charity Organisation Society in league with Mr Bradlaugh—Mr Bradlaugh issues a Writ against the Rev. Brewin Grant—Mr Grant having learned from the Columns of the NATIONAL REFORMER, that Mr Bradlaugh was exceedingly Poor, applied for “Security for Costs,” in the event of Mr Bradlaugh’s Defeat—Mr Bradlaugh replied by Affidavit that He earned (in 1876) £1000 a year, that He received £100 Annual Interest from Investments in Stock, and that He was about to receive £2500 in a Present—Copy of Affidavit No. 1—Extracts from NATIONAL REFORMER showing that Mr Bradlaugh was PARI PASSU with His Affidavit pleading Poverty—Is again interrogated as to His Means—He further admitted to have £6000 invested in Italian Securities, and to have a Journal in England worth £2000—Copy of Affidavit No. 2—More Extracts from His Journal, the NATIONAL REFORMER, down to 25th December 1887, wherein He alleges that He is absolutely unpossessed of Capital—According to Mr Bradlaugh’s Affidavit, He is possessed of £13,600, and according to the NATIONAL REFORMER He “earns His Dinner the Day before He eats It”—What has Mr Bradlaugh done for those for Whom He professes to have helped?—What has He done with the Moneys subscribed to His everlasting “Funds?”—Is it Mr Bradlaugh of the Affidavits or Mr Bradlaugh of the Begging Column of the NATIONAL REFORMER that is to be believed?—Who now is the “Foul-mouthed Scoundrel,” and Who is the “Infamous Liar?”

THE Law of Libel to most men is a study in jurisprudence which, amongst the ordinary class of the com-

munity, it is better to ignore. Mr Bradlaugh has never held this opinion. His reputation, such as it is, has been built up by libel actions, and he has derived considerable assistance in stifling hostile criticism by the terrors of a threatened lawsuit. His party has been served by this wholesome fear. At one time an Infidel was considered to be game for every Tory journalist to flesh his maiden pen in with sarcasm and denunciation. Even the majority of Liberal editors considered themselves justified in attacking a Freethinker, upon the ground that the nearer the kin the more bitter the hatred. Upon the principle that a good libel action is the making of a newspaper, Mr Bradlaugh felt that to be plaintiff in a suit for defamation of character was an excellent way of bringing his name before the public. On his first entrance into life as an agitator, the Press ignored him as not being sufficiently interesting to amuse their readers. As an ordinary lecturer, he would never have been noticed. Mr Bradlaugh was perfectly well aware of this fact, and, at the very outset of his career, he sought notoriety by challenging the clergy. When the clergy took the bait, they brought with them their congregations, whose "entrance moneys" paid expenses, and procured local publicity for the Infidel lecturer. Having arrived at the dignity of being recognised, it was not long before supercilious sneers or open denunciations followed in the columns of local newspapers. This was the opportunity sought for by Mr Bradlaugh. No sooner did eligible paragraphs appear, than Mr Brad-

laugh demanded an apology; or, as alternative, threatened an action for libel. Almost invariably the forensic demand, whether delivered on the platform or by letter, was couched in an ambidexter fashion, which to those accustomed to the game, was strikingly amusing. It mitigated by its generosity the utter annihilation which it threatened the erring scribe. An instant retraction was demanded, along with £50 (as agreed damages), to be paid over to such charity as should be indicated by Mr Bradlaugh. If the person swooped down upon had courage to resist such an attack, the whole affair ended in smoke. If he were timid and vacillating, then it was no difficult task to work upon his pecuniary feelings; he was soon terrified into paying the forfeit of £50 as liquidated damages. Mr Bradlaugh, as a lawyer's clerk, knew his advantages in working up lawsuits at cost price. To a poor parson, or a pious deacon, the terror of having a lawsuit which might cost £100 in fees to his own solicitor, irrespective of a hostile verdict, was sufficient to make him cave in. To a newspaper proprietor, the matter was more serious. A modest libel action can hardly be fought under £200, independent of the "damages" which may be given by a jury, some of whom may have smarted by a report in the journal, from the pen of the local Paul Pry. It makes little difference—winning or losing—as to outlay. The costs of the defence have to be provided for, and even lawyers who are in political sympathy with the local newspaper, demand their fees. With a pauper

plaintiff, it is "Heads I win, tails you lose." The legal training of Mr Bradlaugh would convince him that in most cases he would obtain nominal damages—say one "farthing," as in the "Razor" action, where the plaintiff got neatly shaved. Even if the verdict in the action would not carry costs, the defendant would have been obliged to get up his case as well as if a substantial verdict were expected, while, should the plaintiff not recover damages, the defendant knew he would not recoup the outlay he had been put to. Mr Bradlaugh did not, on all occasions, bring his actions in person. Where he felt certain of victory, he, in order to obtain heavy solicitor's fees, invariably percolated his numerous lawsuits through a lawyer, reserving for himself the ornamental pleading in court. Notwithstanding this fact, in all the actions for libel brought by Mr Bradlaugh, *he has never obtained a substantial verdict before a jury.* In several instances defendants, worked on by fears of expensive litigation, have succumbed to the £50 demand, but Mr Bradlaugh has invariably retired from the field whenever a defendant has shown that he was determined to fight. This was clearly shown in the attack made on the *Yorkshire Post*. The proprietors of this influential journal were not to be intimidated by his threats, or cajoled into silence by the suggested "blackmail" of £50. They published in their newspaper the proposed Interrogatories and the Pleadings by which they intended to

justify their words. From their nature, Mr Bradlaugh discerned that the solicitors were assisted by a clergyman, who would provide their counsel with matter for a cross-examination which would not be pleasant. The *Yorkshire Post* was severely left alone. The same tactics were, with a like result, exhibited to a Hull journal.

The latest and most successful fiasco was the action brought against the proprietor and editor of the *Clerkenwell Chronicle*. It was the most remarkable exhibition of the peculiar qualities of Mr Bradlaugh, which illustrates the success he scored by having to deal with a timid man, from whom he extracted the customary £50 as a *solatium* for resigning his claims to represent East Finsbury, where the "Hall of Science" is located. The story of this lawsuit is not without a moral. In 1885, in anticipation of the General Election, the Freethinkers started the cry of Bradlaugh for East Finsbury. Mr Bradlaugh accepted the mandate, not that he was going to throw Northampton over, or that Northampton was going to reject him, but as a protest from the archiepiscopal electors of the "Hall of Science" district against the refusal to allow him to take his seat in Parliament. He caused it to be intimated that when elected he would resign his seat in favour of Mr James Rowlands, who at that time was his most obsequious political follower. The *Clerkenwell Chronicle* was a local newspaper which supported another rival Liberal candidate. It protested against the

blackguardism displayed by the mobs which met at the "Hall of Science," and systematically broke up all rival political assemblies. In one of his addresses, Mr Bradlaugh boasted of his political integrity, and demanded of his audience an answer to his question of "What Movements have I sold?" Unfortunately for him, the challenge was taken up by his old antagonist the Rev. Brewin Grant, who indited a series of letters in reply to this boastful query. The first communication which appeared in the *Clerkenwell Chronicle* abounded in disagreeable reminiscences. The second was still stronger in its language; but, instead of replying to the charges, Mr Bradlaugh made his usual demand for an apology and £50. This was followed by a Writ of Summons. The proprietor, fearful of the risks of an action, stopped publication of Mr Grant's articles, although the author offered to indemnify the proprietor against all risks. The columns of the *Clerkenwell Chronicle* being closed, the Rev. Brewin Grant's articles were widely circulated in the district which Mr Bradlaugh was contesting, with the result that after a violent speech he resigned his candidature in favour of his nominee, Mr James Rowlands, who, as soon as he was elected, took every possible step to shake off all personal obligations to his leader, and started as an independent Radical politician. The behaviour of Mr Rowlands was considered by Mr Bradlaugh to be an act of the basest political ingratitude.

In the meantime, the actions against Mr James

Lilly, the proprietor of the *Clerkenwell Chronicle*, and against Mr T. E. Hedley, the editor, were proceeded with. Mr Hedley, was only a nominal defendant, who had no control in the conduct of the defence. Mr Bradlaugh refused to sue the Reverend Brewin Grant, or permit his name, as writer, to be substituted in place of that of the proprietor of the newspaper. He, Mr Bradlaugh, knew Mr Lilly to be a timid man, and, what was much more to his purpose, perfectly able to pay damages. He was by profession a stockbroker, who varied his occupation by investing in newspaper property, and in a number of City barbers' shops, where his name was sedulously concealed; but the managers of his Army and Navy Toilet Clubs acted as touts for bill-discounting, after the style of the West End tailors who dabble in usury. He employed a lawyer, who was more anxious to preserve his client's pocket than to defend his politics; and, although the Reverend Brewin Grant was asked by the defendants to provide instructions for defence, he was not permitted to control the legal proceedings. Mr Grant very naturally said, "If I have to be responsible for damages, I must conduct the defence in my own way," but this was not conceded. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that in the many actions for libel which Mr Bradlaugh has brought from time to time against newspaper proprietors, etc., the defenders should have sought the aid of Mr Grant. In the action *Bradlaugh v. Lilly and Hedley*, the following are the material parts

of the Statement of Claim, together with the Interrogatories administered, with their answer :—

“On the 17th day of October 1885, the defendants falsely and maliciously wrote and printed in the said *Clerkenwell Chronicle*, of and concerning the plaintiff, an article headed as follows, ‘What Movements Have I Sold?’ Answered, in which were the words following :—‘He’ (meaning the plaintiff) ‘had a Northampton Life, 1868, published and widely circulated as a leaflet when he was candidate for that borough. This ended with, “Such then *is the man* who is now soliciting the suffrages of the Electors of Northampton” (October 25th, 1868, p. 258). All this was incorporated into an article by himself on himself. He had an American Life done up to herald his dollar stump in the United States 1873, after his election for a borough which he had nursed twelve years, and which he “served” five months out of six years.’”

“On the same day, and in another portion of the said article headed as aforesaid in the said newspaper, the defendants falsely and maliciously wrote, printed, and published of and concerning the plaintiff, the words following :—‘The Parliamentary Life, which is the padding out of an American penny tract into a seven-and-six-penny book, is nominally issued by Mr Adolphe S. Headingley, but is written under the verbal inspiration of the hero of the tale, Mr Charles Bradlaugh himself. Instead of publishing it himself, though he heralded, advertised, and puffed it, he secured the name of Remington, who afterwards returned it on his hands, when the “Free-thought Company Limited” offered the remainder for half-a-crown. The name of Adolphe Headingley was put to the book, to save Mr Bradlaugh’s modesty, that he might not too prominently appear as his own biographer. If we may judge by what he does print, the “kind praise” which he omits for excessive laudation must be rather odorous. But in these Lives he is himself practically author, printer, and publisher, though in one he hides behind Headingley and Remington. Both devices were a ‘sell ;’ the names of Adolphe Headingley as author and Remington as publisher were to throw the public off the scent.

“On the same date, and in another portion of the same article, . . . are certain words, as follows :—‘Amongst the first and foremost of these vile and orthodox scoundrels are his own father and his father’s friend, the late Rev. G. Graham Packer’ . . . ‘The charges against

his father and his father's friend, on which he has long traded for pity and applause at their own expense, and for his own glorification, are in effect that these two combined with others and drove him from home, because of his conscientious convictions, for which he courageously endured the infliction of trouble and poverty. These charges, we are happy to say at the outset, are as false as the self-laudation for courage and conscientious martyrdom to gain sympathy, adherents, and help were specially obtruded in a debate at Sheffield in June 1858, the report of which debate Mr Bradlaugh endorsed as accurate."

"On the same date, and in the same article, etc. . . . the words following :—'What movements have I sold'? (July 26, 1868, p. 51). 'This is the anxious inquiry to which we answer not in full but in part. The list would be a *long one*. There are two difficulties in our way : first to select the cases of sale out of many illustrations and proofs, on each point the specimens to be employed. By "sold" we mean betrayed opportunely, forsaken, used and abused, alternately villified and flattered, and such like ideas. We extend the word "movement" to cause, person of a representative character, relation, position having just moral claims.'"

"On the same date, and in the same article, etc. . . . the words following :—'The fourth form of Bradlaugh's accusation of his own father for his own glory. A fourth account is given directly in Bradlaugh's own name, in a letter to the *Reasoner*, edited by Mr G. J. Holyoake, at that time his honoured leader and helper, and afterwards "sold" and shouldered out by his admiring and grateful pupil.'"

These were the libels complained of, and the Statement of Claim contained the usual legal innuendoes incorporated with the extracts. In this action Interrogatories were exhibited by the Rev. Brewin Grant, which were answered very briefly. I quote *in extenso* the 9th to the 15th, with the answer made by Mr Bradlaugh.

9. "Did you not, in lecturing tours in the United States, avoid the advocacy of Freethought?—secure and boast of opportunities of lecturing in Christian churches, pulpits, halls, and colleges? Did you

not in the lecturing tours practically drop Freethought and adopt Republicanism?"

"10. In your candidature for Northampton, did you not profess and say that if returned to Parliament you would go there not as an Atheist but as a Radical?"

"11. On your return to Parliament, did you first assert that taking an oath by God, in whose existence you did not believe, would not bind your conscience, and afterwards assert your willingness to take an oath by God, and that it would bind your conscience, and insist upon your right to do so?"

"12. Have you not frequently denied the existence of God, insulted the name and idea of God, or how otherwise? And have you not, by taking solemn oaths, called God to witness your actions?"

"13. Have you not sworn loyalty and allegiance to the Queen, and have you asserted that you will not be loyal to this German Royalty?"

"14. Have you not pledged yourself to do all in your power to secure the abolition of Perpetual Pensions? Did you not waive and drop the advocacy of the same to please Mr Gladstone, or how otherwise?"

"15. Have you not, in your published writings and speeches, praised Mr Gladstone as being noble and high-minded, and profess great admiration for him, or how otherwise? Did you not adopt and insert in your journal, or some or what publication edited or published by you, a representation of Mr Gladstone as Pilate vainly washing his hands over a human sacrifice in which you were the victim?"

To these Interrogatories Mr Bradlaugh made the following reply:—

"I object to answer the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Interrogatories as *irrelevant* and impertinent. As to the 12th Interrogatory, I further object to it on the ground that it asks matter of an incriminatory nature, and also that it asks me to express an opinion on the legal effect and theological meaning of the act of oath taking."

The foregoing gives a fair account of the conduct of the action; but it never came to trial. Had it done so, far more searching interrogatories would have been

administered in cross-examination, which had been prepared for the trial, and which I give *in extenso* in the next chapter. Mr James Lilly, thinking that the cheapest way of extricating himself was to pay the £50 demanded, handed his cheque for the amount, and, with a very questionable apology, succumbed. Mr Hedley, however, although tempted with the management of one of Mr Lilly's Army and Navy Toilet Saloons as a bribe, refused to be a party to the settlement. Subsequently to his row with the *Clerkenwell Chronicle*, a short-lived newspaper, which appeared under the pretentious title of the *Beaconsfield Standard*, published a hostile biographical sketch of the fighting Atheist. No sooner did it appear than the inevitable demand for an apology and £50 was made. A letter, of which the following is a copy, was sent to the directors of the Primrose Press Agency:—

“20 CIRCUS ROAD, ST JOHN'S WOOD,
LONDON, N.W., October 28th, 1885.

“James Martin, Silas Nicholls, and Charles Sutton, Esqs.,
Directors,

Primrose Press Agency Coy., Limited.

“GENTLM.,—Drawing your attention to the issue of the *Beaconsfield Standard* of October 24, published by you, and to the infamous allegations contained in it, that I teach—‘1. That chastity is a crime. 2. That unbridled sensuality is a virtue,’ I have to ask you for the immediate and complete withdrawal of these utterly foundationless allegations, and for a full apology to be printed in your paper for the shocking libel; and I have to ask further that you pay a sum of £50 to the funds of St Thomas's Hospital, as some mark of the sincerity of your regret.—Yours obed.

C. BRADLAUGH.”

The directors of the *Beaconsfield Standard* not only refused to publish an apology and pay the £50, but they, in their next issue, printed the above letter, along with a harrowing attack upon Mr Bradlaugh's character. The letter, which was intended to finally put a stop to the publication of any particulars in connection with his career, served merely as an impetus to the directors to go on inserting scathing articles on the junior member for Northampton. The writer of the articles evidently penned them with the object of challenging a prosecution, so that he might thereby have the pleasure afforded him of cross-examining Mr Bradlaugh upon certain facts relating to his private life *which are not referred to in this work*. Mr Bradlaugh is at all times possessed of sufficient penetration to diagnose a journalistic weakling, for while he shrank from contact with firm and resolute antagonists, he pressed his attack against the wealthy and timid Mr Lilly, barber-shop and newspaper proprietor. The directors of the Primrose Press Agency were left masters of the field. They were the victors; Mr Bradlaugh was the vanquished. Under the circumstances, Mr Bradlaugh entrenched himself behind the coward's fortification—an active retreat; and this, after all, was possibly the best course he could have adopted, for it would have somewhat tasked his forensic acumen to parry with the questions which the reader will find in the following chapter.

Before leaving this subject of libel, it will be well

to refer briefly to the action *Bradlaugh v. Grant*, which, in a rash moment, was instituted by the Atheist against the Christian, on the ground that the latter uttered, at a public meeting in the North of England, slanderous words calculated to damage the reputation of the so-called Infidel leader. Mr Bradlaugh insisted that Mr Grant's utterances and innuendoes were defamatory to his character. Possibly they were, but Mr Grant was not of that opinion. From the then general aspect of affairs, one would have been justified in surmising that there was nigh at hand a prospect of those two disputants settling their differences in a court of law, where each litigant would have had afforded to him the advantage of having his grievance duly considered by a jury, and weighed by a judge. The Secularists were delighted to learn that Mr Bradlaugh had issued a writ against the Rev. Brewin Grant; and they, in their simplicity, commenced to raise such funds as they were led to believe were required for legal expenses. The dupes who provided the "funds" were given to understand, from the columns of the *National Reformer*, that the Rev. Brewin Grant would be finally put to silence by a verdict and crushing damages in favour of the plaintiff. Mr Bradlaugh, "the friend of the poor working man," was by no means moderate in the valuation of his reputation, when he estimated the damage done to his "character" at the trifling sum of £5,000. Mr Grant made preparations to meet his antagonist. He determined

to enter court, plead justification, and dissect, in cross-examination, the entire career of the plaintiff. Mr Grant had not sought after such an encounter; but, the opportunity having been forced upon him, he resolved to put to the test the unrivalled armoury of facts accumulated by a lifetime of observation of Infidel tactics. Mr Grant was familiar with every dodge concocted at the "Hall of Science" for the glorification of Mr Bradlaugh. For several years he engaged himself in detecting Infidel sophistries, and in denouncing Infidel immoralities. To him, no more fitting opportunity could present itself than that of meeting in a court of law the high priest of low infidelity. He took the full measure of his antagonist, and prepared to act in court as his own counsel; for he well knew that it would be difficult to procure the services of an advocate who would wade through "literature" which, when not clothed in blasphemy, fumed with obscenity. In response to the appeals of his son, Mr Henry Grant, some eight hundred clergymen contributed a limited subscription toward the legal expenses of their brother ecclesiastic.

At this juncture, Mr Bradlaugh availed himself of a strange ally. Being an Atheist, he could not appeal to the Bishop of London to put his foot on the defendant in the action; but through his friends the possessor of thousands of pounds safely invested made his peace with the Charity Organisation Society, and appealed for help in his extremity. Seeing that the C.O.S. had been so often denounced by the Rev. Brewin Grant

as an unmitigated swindle, its chiefs, naturally enough, joined in the hunt against the parson who dared to stigmatise its employées as a gang of impostors. The society was assured that Mr Grant's expenses incurred in defending himself could not possibly exceed £150. The answer which Mr Grant vouchsafed, was the presentation of documents showing that he had then expended £200. It became evident to the society that Mr Grant was prepared to reveal to the British public the character of Mr Bradlaugh in such a manner that every statement against Mr Bradlaugh would have been proved with that deliberation which legal evidence demands.

On the 10th October 1876, the writ was issued by Mr Bradlaugh's solicitors against the Rev. Brewin Grant, which proved that Mr Bradlaugh was determined to have his character vindicated against the aspersions of the cleric, who, on so many occasions, had met him in debate, and who was then prepared to meet him in the law courts. As the columns of the *National Reformer* continually evinced to the numerous and benighted followers of the high priest of the "Hall of Science" that their "chief" was in almost abject poverty, not knowing, very frequently, how he could earn or how he could obtain his to-morrow's dinner, Mr Grant concluded that he should run an exceedingly bad chance of being paid his costs in the action, in the event of his victory over the poor plaintiff of the three-and-sixpenny lodging. Accordingly, on the 31st No-

vember, the Rev. Brewin Grant filed an affidavit, wherein he stated that the plaintiff had "no visible means of paying the costs of the defendant, should a verdict be not found for the plaintiff." In reply to Mr Grant's affidavit, Mr Bradlaugh, who had hitherto been poorer than a church mouse, made an affidavit, from which I extract the following:—

"I, Charles Bradlaugh, the above-named plaintiff, do solemnly promise and declare that the evidence given by me to the Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"1. That I have read the affidavit in the case made by the above-named defendant, in support of an application for security for costs in this action, on the ground that I have no visible means of paying the costs of his defence in the event of a verdict being found for him against me.

"2. That this action is brought to recover damages for slander of a very serious nature, wherein he charges me with having compromised a suit, in which suit he alleges that I charged persons with having committed murder. He also charges me with being a person in insolvent circumstances, and having absconded to avoid the payment of my debts, which is an indictable offence under the bankruptcy laws, I, at the time of such alleged absconding, being the proprietor of a newspaper.

.

"4. I say that it is not true that I am a person without means and unable to pay the costs of the defendant to this action in the event of a verdict being found for him. I say that I am entitled to be paid a sum of £2,500 of the estate of the late Mr Turberville, deceased. . . . I am also in receipt of an annual income of £100 from investments made by me in stock.

"5. I am also in receipt of an income of at least £1,000 per annum from my avocation as a lecturer, author, and journalist.

"6. I am the proprietor, editor, and publisher of a newspaper called the *National Reformer*, which produces a net annual profit to me of about £500 a year, which forms part of the said income mentioned in paragraph 5.

"7. . . . and in addition, I say I have ample means to pay the costs of the defendant, in the event of a verdict being found for him.

"8. That I believe the defendant has no real defence to this action on the merits.

"I certify that, under the power to me given in this behalf by the Evidence Amendment Act, 1870, I have satisfied myself that the taking of an Oath by the above-named Charles Bradlaugh would have no binding effect on his conscience, and that the said Charles Bradlaugh made the promise and declaration prescribed by the Evidence Further Amendment Act, 1869, at No. 8 Bartlett's Buildings, in the City of London, this 20th day of November 1876,

CH. BRADLAUGH.

Before me,

ED. LETTS,

*A Commissioner to administer Oaths in the
Supreme Court of Judicature."*

This affidavit not only astonished the Rev. Brewin Grant, but it literally appalled him. Mr Bradlaugh, who was in a perennial state of impecuniosity, "earning my dinner the day before I eat it," and "living in a poor and humble lodging in the east of London," now affirmed that he earned £1,000 a year; that he was entitled to £2,500 from the Turberville estate, and that he received annually interest to the amount of £100 from capital (at least £2,000) invested in stock. Practically, Mr Bradlaugh affirmed that, on the date of his affidavit, he was worth £6,500. Can it be possible, thought the Rev. Brewin Grant, that Mr Brad-

laugh, who ever and anon informs his *clientèle* that he is in a chronic state of poverty and debt, is really worth £6,500, or has he become insane, and irresponsible for the contents of his affidavit of the 20th November 1876? Laying down, in utter bewilderment, the plaintiff's affidavit, the defendant takes up the plaintiff's journal, the *National Reformer*, to verify, as far as possible, the contents of his affidavit. Not much consolation to be derived from such passages as these:—

“You (Bishop of Lincoln) and your colleagues, in your splendid palaces; I in two small rooms in a back street of East London. You and your titled co-workers, not only with personal incomes of thousands, but with huge funds placed from day to day at your disposal; I poor, in debt, and earning my dinner the day before I eat it. (Charles Bradlaugh in *National Reformer*.)

“I came back to Europe reluctantly, for I went to the United States to earn money to pay my debts, and I am compelled to return poorer than I left. (Charles Bradlaugh in *National Reformer*, 9th January 1876, p. 26.)

“He had been asked, ‘Why do you go to America?’ He went to pay his debts, because he would not stoop to wipe them out by becoming bankrupt. (*National Reformer*, 23d May 1875, p. 327.)

“Many friends in the country will be interested in knowing that by the decision in the Turberville Will case . . . the sum of £2,500 is to be paid to Mr Charles Bradlaugh . . . Although this will not put Mr Bradlaugh entirely out of debt, it will relieve him of liabilities to that amount, and gives him fair hope that he may soon be entirely free from the pecuniary burdens against which he has been resolutely struggling for several years. (*National Reformer*, 13th August 1876.)

“Why did your Church, with its enormous wealth, permit a man like Bradlaugh, poor and in debt, with only a few earnest workers to encourage him. (*National Reformer*, 18th April 1875, p. 241.)”

After re-reading in the columns of the *National Reformer* several poverty-stricken and dupe-beguiling

sentences couched in sympathy-provoking language, similar to or more pronounced than the foregoing extracts, the Rev. Brewin Grant concluded that no better course than that of again feeling, through the medium of an affidavit, the financial pulse of the friend and leader of "the horny-handed sons of toil," who was the poor occupant of "the two small rooms in East London," could be adopted. Once more the defendant applied the affidavit test to the purse-strings of his foe, and alleged that he had carefully read Mr Bradlaugh's affidavit, and that he believed Mr Bradlaugh wished, in his declaration, to convey an erroneous impression in regard to his property and means of livelihood. Mr Grant went on to say that he believed, in the event of Mr Bradlaugh's being ordered to pay the costs in the action, he (Mr Grant) would be unable to obtain them from the defendant, as the columns of the *National Reformer* prove conclusively that Mr Bradlaugh is without means. In his affidavit, Mr Grant cited several of the "poverty" passages which frequently appeared in the *National Reformer*. In reply to the second affidavit of the Rev. Brewin Grant, Mr Bradlaugh filed an affidavit, from which the paragraphs in the lithograph attached hereto are taken.

Thus it will be seen that the poor and half-starving "Iconoclast" has affirmed by affidavits that he is possessed of at least £13,600; and he well knew it was unnecessary to state the amount of his entire wealth, in answer to the defendant's summons. With the idea

In the High Court
Queen's Bench DIV

Between.

I Charles
Road East, in
named Plan
evidence give
whole truth,

3. I say
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the total cha
£3.500, and
beyond, the
Declaration,

4. I say
nor have I
Creditors, and
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1876- 13- no 16-

In the High Court of Justice
Queen's Bench DIVISION.

Bradlaugh
— v —
Grant —

Extract from
Affidavit of Plaintiff.

Lewis & Lewis.
10 & 11 City Place, Holborn C.C.
Plaintiffs' Solicitors.

present in his mind of the Commissioner of Income Tax, Mr Bradlaugh disclosed no more of his fortune than was absolutely necessary to rebut the allegation of his inability to pay costs. He fenced with the question, especially with that part dealing with Italian Stock. In Italian Stock, and other foreign securities, Mr Bradlaugh is known to be a large investor. His reason for holding foreign securities rather than English Consols, can be none other than that of avoiding the payment of income tax; and it is well known that interest on Italian Rentes can be transmitted to investors without their paying the toll demanded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer from English capitalists. By investing in Foreign Stocks, Mr Bradlaugh shrewdly contrives to hide his wealth from the eyes of his admirers who contribute to his various cadging collections "to fight the bigots." Compare the *admitted* wealth—£13,600—of Mr Bradlaugh, with his subsequent statements, which are made immediately after he has by affidavit *affirmed* to be worth £13,600, in the columns of his journal, the *National Reformer*.

"SHILLING FUND.—This fund is used by Mr Bradlaugh in his absolute discretion, for any purposes he may think calculated to promote the advancement of the movement. No account will be furnished of the expenditure, and subscriptions are only received from those who have confidence in the manner in which the fund will be used. Prestwich friends (profit on sale of literature), 2s. 7½d.; T. P., Manchester, 5s.; C. W., 10s.—*National Reformer*, 10th December 1876, p. 377.

"NEXT ELECTION FUND.—J. D., Hawick, 3s.; A Few Friends from

the "Garibaldi," 5s. 8d.—*National Reformer*, 17th December 1876, p. 393.

"SHILLING FUND.*—This fund is used by Mr Bradlaugh in his absolute discretion, for any purposes he may think calculated to promote the advancement of the movement. No account will be furnished of the expenditure, and subscriptions are only received from those who have confidence in the manner in which the fund will be used. J. D., Hawick, 3s. ; Wakefield Branch of N. S. S. (profit on sale of literature), 4s. 4½d. ; Messrs Hirst, 5s. ; Nutter, A. Cadman, J. Cadman, Denton, Newell, each 2s. 6d. ; Smith, Stones, Blakey, each 2s. ; Metcalf and Boardman, each 1s.—*National Reformer*, 17th December 1876, p. 393.

"To the many who trust us we tender our hand ; to any who have not learned to trust us, we say, examine our work.†—*National Reformer*, 31st December 1876, p. 419.

"It was a *Freethinker of advanced type who lent Mr Bradlaugh the money to pay for 'the clean bed.'*—*National Reformer*, 28th January 1877, p. 58.

"*Jacob Allen Watford.*—We object to your application for enrolment in the N. S. S., because you have been living very dishonestly, and we have no evidence of any reform.—*National Reformer*, 4th February 1877, p. 73."

After reading the affidavits and the foregoing extracts, no one, of course, could have the impudence to insinuate that Mr Bradlaugh was not a strictly honest gentleman ; and it will be readily admitted that no one was more qualified than was Mr Bradlaugh to advise Jacob Allen Watford. When the begging column of the *National Reformer* for 1877 is consulted, we read :—

"The more active help is therefore needed from each of our friends to maintain the position achieved, and to enable us (Mr Bradlaugh) to win further victories. Some few can help with their purses.—*National Reformer*, 2d January 1887, p. 1."

* NEXT ELECTION FUND and SHILLING FUND are lasting "funds" from June to January, and they are never accounted for.

† I say, if you wish to trust Mr Bradlaugh, do not examine his work.

"PROPAGANDIST FUND.*—'Two T.'s' 10s.—*National Reformer*, 2d January 1887, p. 9.

"LITERATURE FUND.†—J. Caspar, 2s.; J. Coupe, 1s. 8d.; A. Bouttes 1s. 6d.—*National Reformer*, 9th January 1887, p. 25.

"To help to relieve Mr Bradlaugh from debts incurred in recent litigation.—W. Lake, £1, 1s.—*National Reformer*, 9th January 1887, p. 25.

"Metropolitan friends unable to be present can send their donations to Mr Bradlaugh to add to the collection.—*National Reformer*, 9th January 1887, p. 25.

"Friends who can secure us new subscribers for this journal during the present month will much help our new year's struggle.—*National Reformer*, 9th January 1887, p. 25.

"Mr Bradlaugh's Election Expenses.—B. E. Marks, £1, 2s. 6d.—*National Reformer*, 16th January 1887, p. 41.

"Towards debt for costs in Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary litigation, per R. Forder.—A. W. Marks, £1, 1s.; H. Underdown, 2s.; J. Helm, Ontario, £1, 8s. 6d.; T. Barton, Wigan, 5s. Received from Mr Jump when remitting, G. A., 7s. 7d.—*National Reformer*,‡ 16th January 1877, p. 41.

"Towards costs of Mr Bradlaugh's recent struggle.—J. C. R., £1, 5s.; J. Marr, £1.—*National Reformer*, 6th February 1877, p. 89.

"If Freethinkers had the funds of which Canon Hole and his friends have unjustly deprived their poorer brethren, there would be some reason in the taunt.§—*National Reformer*, 6th February 1887, p. 90.

"During my long Parliamentary STRUGGLE, one of my great opponents in the Stroud district was Mr G. Holloway, M.P., who used against me the COARSE LITERATURE then circulated by the Conservative Association, and especially attacked me for my Malthusian views, which he distorted into 'obscurity.'—*National Reformer*, 13th February 1887, p. 106.

"Towards debt incurred in Mr Bradlaugh's recent litigation.—

* Another standing Bradlaugh institution.

† Unlimited "Funds!"

‡ In the same number of the *National Reformer*, subscriptions for various "funds," to the amount of some £7, is acknowledged.

§ Mr Bradlaugh, of course, has *no* funds; and he *never* deprived his poorer brethren of their fourpences, or their food!

Ernestine L. Rose, £20.—*National Reformer*, 20th February 1887, p. 121.

"Towards debt remaining on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—R. Jones, 2s. 6d. Per H. Sprague, Worcester : H. Sprague, 2s. ; More 2s. ; Sigley, 2s. ; Peachey, 1s.—*National Reformer*, 27th February 1887, p. 137.

"Mr Bradlaugh thanks the sender of sack of splendid potatoes.—*National Reformer*, 13th March 1887, p. 169.

"Towards debt from Mr Bradlaugh's recent Parliamentary struggle.—J. Brierley, 2s. 6d.—*National Reformer*, 13th March 1887, p. 169.

"W. M. R., Merthyr.—We thank you for your counsel, and shall trust to our friends generally to fight our battles for us.—*National Reformer*, 13th March 1887, p. 169.

"Towards balance of debt on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—Mr Ferguson, 2s. 6d. ; J. Keith, £1.—*National Reformer*, 27th March 1887, p. 201.

"J. West, Poplar.—Thanks, especially for the important enclosure.—*National Reformer*, 27th March 1887, p. 201.

"I find the work-strain so severe that it will only be by carefully recruiting my strength *that I can earn my daily livelihood*, whilst doing my Parliamentary work.—*National Reformer*, 27th March 1887, p. 202.

"Towards debt remaining from Mr Bradlaugh's litigation and struggle.—William Winterbottom, 2s. 6d. ; J. G. R., £1, 5s. ; B. E. Marks, 12s. 6d.—*National Reformer*, 10th April 1887, p. 233.

"Towards expenses of Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—Horace Seal, £5 ; Blackburn Branch of National Secular Society, £1.—*National Reformer*, 24th April 1887, p. 265.

"I defended myself as best I could, and fortunately defeated the serious attempts to ruin me ; but the struggle left me with a heavy debt burden, which I am gradually discharging.—*National Reformer*, 24th April 1887, p. 266.

"I got out of the building . . . and in a brief quarter of an hour lay in a Pullman car, steaming *en route* for Newcastle-on-Tyne.* —*National Reformer*, 24th April 1887, p. 266."

The reader has now had a sufficient dose of Mr Bradlaugh's "poverty" and his "debt." The "poverty"

* Is travelling by Pullman cars one of Mr Bradlaugh's *struggles*?

is, as witnesseth the columns of the *National Reformer*, everlasting; and although some £400 or £500 is annually subscribed "towards the debt still due on Mr Bradlaugh's long Parliamentary struggle," the "poverty" wasteth not, neither doth the "debt" fail, according to the word of Bradlaugh, which he speaketh in the begging column of the *National Reformer*.*

Let us take a farewell peep into the begging-box as it presents itself before going to press.

"I have only what I can earn from day to day by my tongue to pay my debts and to keep me from week to week, and the length of the Parliamentary session has sorely crippled my earnings this year.—*National Reformer*, 16th October 1887, p. 249.

"Towards reduction of the debt still due on Mr Bradlaugh's long Parliamentary struggle.—B. E. Marks, 12s. 6d.; Toby King, 2s. 6d.—*National Reformer*, 16th October 1887, p. 249.

"Towards extinction of debt remaining on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—A. E. W., 12s. 6d.; H. Merridew, 1s.; Thomas Elliott, £1, 1s.; James Kenworthy, New Plymouth, New Zealand, £1.—*National Reformer*, 23d October 1887, p. 265.

"*T. Bullock, Brimscombe*.—Thanks very much for welcome box of fruit and vegetables.—*National Reformer*, 23d October 1887, p. 265.

"*A. S.*—They are (newspaper paragraphs), as you suggest, intended to injure Mr Bradlaugh, but libels by one or two more rascals can hardly be very serious.—*National Reformer*, 23d October 1887, p. 265.

"Towards debt remaining from Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—J. R. Anderson, £1, 1s.; W. Jump, Wigan, 10s.—*National Reformer*, 30th October 1887, p. 281.

"*J. F. Hampson, Bolton*, has arranged with his news-agent to order six copies extra of *National Reformer* for three months. If one hundred other friends would do as J. F. H. has done, the help in pushing this journal would be enormous, and OUR PERSONAL STRUGGLE much easier.—*National Reformer*, 30th October 1887, p. 281.

* With apologies to 1 Kings chap. xvii. ver. 6, and to the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil.

"Towards the debt remaining on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—Emma Jackson, £1; S. Farrow, 7s.—*National Reformer*, 20th November 1887, p. 329.

"A. H. H., Nottingham.—Thanks for remittance.—*National Reformer*, 20th November 1887, p. 329.

"W. S. Nelson desires to give two years and nine months, *Our Corner*, to be sold for the liquidation of the debt due on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.*—*National Reformer*, 20th November 1887, p. 329.

"R. Chapman sends £1, result of sale of literature given by Mr Henry Sanderson, of the late Jarrow Branch, sold by William H. Taylor, of the South Shields Branch, towards paying the debt incurred by Mr C. Bradlaugh in fighting the battle for constitutional rights; J. Cartwright, 2s.—*National Reformer*, 27th November 1887, p. 345.

"Towards balance of debt remaining on Mr Bradlaugh's long Parliamentary struggle.—J. C., £2.—*National Reformer*, 11th December 1887, p. 377.

"We thank the various friends who are pressing the sale of the *National Reformer*. We need as much active help of this kind as possible.—*National Reformer*, 18th December 1887, p. 393.

"In reduction of debt on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—B. A. Marks, 10s.—*National Reformer*, 18th December 1887, p. 393.

"R. H., Dublin.—Our work is so heavy, and our pecuniary burdens so great, that we are determined to avoid lawsuits as much as we possibly can.—*National Reformer*, 18th December 1887, p. 393.

"Charles James Garcia.—You imply that Mr Bradlaugh is wealthy, and say Mr Bradlaugh has 'gathered much pelf.' Unfortunately your statement has not the shadow of truth. It is only by incessant work that Mr Bradlaugh can meet the debts he has contracted in his long struggle.—*National Reformer*, 18th December 1887, p. 393.

"In aid of the debt on Mr Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle.—S. Dobson, 5s.—*National Reformer*, 25th December 1887, p. 409.

"An old gentleman of seventy-three, in failing health, sends through Mr Forder an intimation that he leaves '£100 legacy un-

* Will a few kind and valiant dupes volunteer to sell their shirts, and hand the proceeds therefrom to Mr Bradlaugh, in order to enable him to discharge debts incurred in his late Parliamentary struggles? Subscriptions will also be received by the Author, c/o D. J. Gunn & Co., and will be handed by him to Mr Bradlaugh.

reservedly to Mr Bradlaugh towards the costs he has been put to, and as the least way to show my profound regard for him.—*National Reformer*, 25th December 1887, p. 411."

It must be borne in mind that the affidavits were made some months before Mr Bradlaugh determined on the great *coup*, which he landed to the tune of some £15,000, over the publication of the "Fruits." When he made his affidavits of means, he was leading his disciples to believe that his exertions in the cause of Free-thought had reduced him to absolute penury, and, to escape bankruptcy, he was compelled to live in two small rooms, in a back street of East London, at a rental of sixpence a day. Upon the strength of his ostentatious show of poverty, he collected his eleemosynary benevolences, and without these hypocritical pretences of poverty, the poor Secularists would not have deprived themselves of food in order to send their hard-earned shillings to a man who had investments in Home and Foreign Securities and other moneys, to the value of at least £13,600. It is contrary to common sense to suppose that a hard-working shoemaker, or a poor labourer, earning fifteen shillings a week, would have gone dinnerless one or two days in each week, in order to be able to contribute to the "funds to fight the bigots," if they had had the remotest idea that Mr Bradlaugh could any day he might think fit go to his broker and realise £13,000, without putting in jeopardy the payment of his three-and-sixpenny rent in Turner Street. When an honest man is in debt, he

pays his debt by realising upon his securities and investments when he has any; and, when he has not got any capital, and is still in debt, he never for a moment dreams of concocting mean and contemptible and despicable plans, common to scoundrels, to extract coppers from the hard-working and most ignorant of the people, with which to pay off his liabilities.

Has Mr Bradlaugh, the friend of "the horny-handed sons of toil," ever led his poor, simple, and benighted *clientèle*, unsuspecting of trickery, and reposing in him full confidence, by the still waters and green pastures of luxury, which are so well known to a few of his unsavoury sycophants, who make up that esoteric body which meets periodically at the London Hotel and elsewhere, to sit down to sumptuous repasts? Has he, when many of his simpletons went dinnerless, assisted them in the purchase of a meal? Has he, when he found his dupes half naked and shivering, and without employment, supplied them with any of the necessaries of life? Has he ever been, as he so profusely professes to have been, the friend of "the horny-handed sons of toil?" Has he befriended the widow and the fatherless? Has he befriended even his own widowed mother? Has he ever been grateful for kindness bestowed on him? To all of these questions the answer is a most emphatic No. But could Mr Bradlaugh financially assist anyone? Read his affidavits, and consider his sources of income which are indicated, and know therefrom that

he is possessed of what is really an ample fortune. In the ears of the poor and the unthinking he has incessantly, and even down to the date of my going to press, whispered in language, sweet, slow, and syllabic, "I am a poor man, earning from day to day what keeps me from week to week." Let us analyse his sweet mendicancies by scraping off the hypocritical veneer, and we shall find that the language of Charles Bradlaugh is as false as it is heartless. His poor and widowed mother purchased his discharge from the army. The daughters of Richard Carlile, who were themselves exceedingly poor, shared with him their scanty meals. The old Freethinkers took him, a young man, by the hand, and introduced him to the party. How, I ask, has he repaid all the kindness bestowed on him? Why, he, even in his adolescence, began fair to rival the fame of his historical hero Ananias, whom he has since excelled, by lying against his father; by lying against his mother; by lying against his pastor; and by lying whenever and wherever he deemed a lie would serve his interests, or minister to his vanity. He conveniently forgot and ignored the two daughters of Richard Carlile; he jealously blasted as best he could the career of every superior Freethinker; and, with his brush besmeared in obscenity, he defiled the escutcheon of Free-thought almost irreparably.

To-day, as twenty years ago, he requires "funds to fight the bigots." "To fight the bigots," forsooth! Financially, there are no "bigots" to fight—fighting

“bigots” of the Newdegate stamp is not a loss but a great gain—but there are dinners, or rather banquets, to be paid for at the London Hotel and elsewhere; there are casks of superior wines to be paid for; there are horses and grooms to be paid for, in order that the daughters of the occupant of the three-and-sixpenny lodging may air their vanity in Hyde Park, and there are vain-glorious lawsuits and other popular but useless high jinks to be paid for to gratify the litigious and political and “Dirtite” vanity of the ever-poor Atheist who believes not in God, but who, nevertheless, swears by Him before the Commons of England.

“Foul-mouthed scoundrel,” “infamous liar,” and such like euphemistic epithets, Mr Bradlaugh has been wont to apply to all who, in the past, have dared to hint that his honour was questionable or his veracity impeachable. Actions for libel have been threatened right and left against all more or less unimportant organs in the press which have ventured to refer to his character with even the slightest aspersion. Appalled by the terror of his forensic notoriety, the aspersers have almost uniformly eaten the leek with the best grace they could, and paid pecuniary penalty. I have said what I have said, and I will *not* eat the leek, for I have taken the pains to be sure that what I say is true; and whatever may be the sacrifice to myself, I shall be consoled by the reflection that I have performed a duty to the public, and torn away the veil from the face of an exceedingly sinister Mokanna.

Who now is the "foul-mouthed scoundrel?" Who now is the "infamous liar?" Who says Mr Bradlaugh is poor, "earning my dinner the day before I eat it?" Who says this? Mr Bradlaugh himself. Who, on the other hand, says that Mr Bradlaugh is in receipt "of an income of at least £1,000 per annum?" Who says this? Mr Bradlaugh. Who says that Mr Bradlaugh owns "Stock in the Grand Book of the Kingdom of Italy, and mortgage securities in the Kingdom of Italy to the value of at least £6,000?" Who says this? Mr Bradlaugh. The one Mr Charles Bradlaugh prints incessantly that he is poor and hardly knows where to get his dinner, and lives in a three-and-sixpenny lodging. The other Charles Bradlaugh makes affidavits setting forth that he is possessed of estate to the value of at least £13,600. Which of the two Mr Charles Bradlaughs is telling the truth, and which is the "infamous liar?" Let the Mr Charles Bradlaugh of the begging column of the *National Reformer*, and the Mr Charles Bradlaugh of the affidavits settle this problem between themselves.

Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.

So much for the Cræsus of the three-and-sixpenny lodging. So much for the stentorian friend and champion of the "horny-handed sons of toil." So much for the disinterested advocate of "poor people in mill and workshop, in pit and factory." Some twelve years have come and gone since Mr Bradlaugh made his affidavits, before Mr Edward Letts, solicitor, of 8 Bartlett's Build-

ings, in the City of London, and although his lectures "draw" much better now than they did twelve years ago, when his income was, by his own admission, over £1,000 a year, and although since then he has earned at least £15,000 from the Knowlton pamphlet, he is as poor as ever. Even yet he hardly knows where to get his dinner.

Down to the date of my going to press, he is in a distressing state of impecuniosity, and, although tens of thousands of the poor of England whom he has managed to dupe and betray are starving, he rattles his begging-box in their teeth as shamelessly as ever. And all the while he imports casks of expensive wines from Italy, and acts as the connoisseur in vintages when he condescends to dine with his sycophants, or to engage in revelries at his favourite hotel. Is it not one of the greatest farces in modern political experience to find that in this age of daily newspapers and school-boards, the public should be so grossly deceived in its heroes? We do not feel surprised when we read how, over a century ago, John Wilkes befooled the electors of Middlesex in precisely a similar manner to that which Mr Bradlaugh has befooled the electors of Northampton. The cycle of folly has revolved only to show that the modern Wilkes is as seductive, even if as ill-favoured as his prototype. Could the Northampton shoemakers only see him where some in London have seen him! Could the Durham pit-men, could the Lancashire operatives, only see his two daughters

riding in the Park, each with a groom behind her, as many of us here in London have seen them! No ladies in the Park, with pawing chargers and with the blood of the old Norman nobility in their veins, look half so "uppish" as the two daughters of poor, begging, and half-dinnerless Charles Bradlaugh of the three-and-sixpenny lodging. The one daughter still bears her father's notorious and impecunious name, and the other daughter, with her steed beneath her, and her mounted groom behind her, is ostentatiously the wife of a working printer. If she were ostentatiously the wife of anything higher, the fact might spoil the profitable jingle of her father's begging-box. Let us trust that these ladies in Rotten Row are dutiful daughters, and that they are not so unfilial as not to practise what their father preaches.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Two Hundred and Eleven Questions prepared by the Rev. Brewin Grant for the Purpose of being put to Mr Bradlaugh in Cross-Examination—Questions 1 to 17 refer to what Mr Grant called the “American Dollar Stump Life” of Mr Bradlaugh—Questions 18 to 55 have reference to Mr Bradlaugh’s neglecting the Interests of His Constituents—Questions 56 to 71 refer to Mr Bradlaugh’s Methods adopted for advertising Himself—Questions 72 to 111 have reference to His Early Life and His Slanders against His Parents, etc.—Questions 112 to 155 relate to His “Sales” of Public Causes, and His oft-repeated Stock Phrase, “I want to be True; I try to be True”—Questions 156 to 199 deal most especially with His “Sales” or Betrayals of Public Men—Questions 200 to 211 were intended to elicit the Truth re His “Fake” Friendship or the “Sale” of His Private Friends.

THE Rev. Brewin Grant, in anticipation of being substituted in place of the proprietor of the *Clerkenwell Chronicle* as the avowed writer of the articles relative to Mr Bradlaugh’s candidature, was indulging in the expectation that he would at last be able to meet his antagonist before a jury; but he reckoned without his host. He prepared a series of questions for the cross-examination of Mr Bradlaugh, but the latter resolved not to afford the opportunity sought for. The questions still remain an amusing catechetical inquiry into the past career of Mr Bradlaugh prior to the date of his taking his seat in Parliament, and are a fair specimen of the dialectics between these renowned

antagonists on those rare occasions when Mr Bradlaugh would be persuaded to stay on the same platform with the Christian warrior without losing his temper.

The paragraphs Nos. 1 to 17 had reference to what was designated the "American Dollar Stump Life" in the 2d and 3d Statement of Claim.

1. Did you give to your supporters in England, as the reason for going on a lecture tour in America, that you went in order to obtain money to pay your debts, instead of wiping them out by bankruptcy?

2. Did you tell the Americans that you came there to obtain their sympathy and moral aid on behalf of a Republic in England?

3. Did you adopt and insert in your Journal the suggestion that your visit to America, as to its success, might not be second, or might only be second, to that of Charles Dickens? Did Mr Dickens clear some £20,000 in his lecture and reading tour?

4. Did you write, publish, and reprint for publication, your Autobiography just before your first American lecture tour?

5. What was your object in that publication? Was it an advertisement or introduction to the American public to facilitate the purpose of that tour, or for what else?

6. Were you invited by the Freethinkers of America to address your brother Freethinkers there in their own cities, and were you congratulated in a farewell address as the only Freethought advocate who had been so honoured?

7. Did you avoid all advocacy of Freethought in America, and secure and boast of opportunities of lecturing in Christian pulpits, halls, and colleges?

8. Did you afterwards, to your English friends, boast that you had not stained their Freethought banner in America?

9. Had you not left that banner at home, and adopted the Banner of Republicanism for the American lecture market?

10. Was any objection made in America that you were sailing under false colours?

11. Did you not make three such visits to America, and afterwards, having exhausted the mine of general lecturing and Christian audiences, did you propose, or entertain the proposal, of a fourth tour

in America in which you were to lecture in the other capacity—namely, that of Freethinker?

12. Had you not up to that time, or during your first three tours, sold, or opportunely forsaken, the cause of those Freethinkers who invited you to America as a Freethought advocate.

13. Did you not have a private meeting with the Freethinking brethren at the Lotus Club, and declare that this was the only occasion on which you mixed with that cause in your earlier tours?

14. Did you not propose to reward the patience of expectant Freethinkers there by frankly joining and leading them as advocate, after obtaining all that could be secured from the Christian public, while Freethought was ignored, adjourned, and outwardly forsaken?

15. Did you have occasion or necessity during, or in consequence of, this reticent period in America, to assure your English supporters that you had not altered in your theological opinions?

16. Was not your visit to America a Dollar-Stump of the States, made, as you say, to get money to pay your debts, and was not the Autobiography prepared and published to advertise your lecture tour?

17. Is it not true that *he*, meaning *you*, had an American Life done up to herald his Dollar-Stump in the United States, 1873?

The paragraphs Nos. 18 to 55 have reference to the neglect of Mr Bradlaugh in the interests of his constituents during six years, of which he only served them *five* months.

18. Did you, in the ordinary sense of the words, nurse Northampton, and for how long; and do you think it more unlawful to nurse a borough than to nurse a baby? *

19. Did Mrs Besant help to rock the cradle, aided by your other assistants and propagandists, Messrs Foote and C. Watts?

20. Did you serve your constituents, as voting Member of Parliament, more than five months, and, if so, how many days over that space of time?

21. Did you dismember yourself by a claim to affirm which disabled your oath, and disfranchised your constituents?

22. Did you profess to believe that the Evidence Amendment

* This has reference to the "Malthusian League."

Acts, passed to enable unbelievers to affirm as witnesses in courts of justice, gave you the right to affirm in Parliament as legislator?

23. Had you, before being elected, written and published that you would "be obliged" to take the oath, or to that effect?

24. When you wrote and published this, were you not well acquainted with the Evidence Amendment Acts, and specially interested in them?

25. Did not the statement to the effect that you would "be obliged" to go through the form, imply a promise that you would do so?

26. Did you ever to your constituents, before being elected by them, state any objection or scruple about the oath?

27. Did you say—when professing to take it, after rendering yourself incompetent by the claim to affirm—that you were not sent by Northampton to fight the oath question?

28. Did you give this as an excuse for undertaking to swear, after you had claimed to affirm, as one on whose conscience an oath is not binding?

29. Did you not, in the form in which you raised the oath question, re-assume a character which you had repudiated on the hustings—namely, the character of Atheist, which character you had professed during your candidature was foreign to, and unconnected with, your political capacity as candidate and representative?

30. Did you not publish that you would go into the House not as Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist, but as Charles Bradlaugh the Radical?

31. Have you not published as a boast and rejoicing for Atheists, that your first act in the House was to claim as Freethinker, that is, Atheist?

32. Did you sell Atheism on the hustings and profess Radicalism instead as something different; and did you in the House sell Radicalism and resume the temporarily discarded Atheistic position?

33. Did you publish a report of a lecture by you containing these words, "For himself he hoped to plant the banner of Freethought in front of the Speaker's desk, so that he (the Speaker) might have a good look at it?"

34. Did you candidate in one character, repudiating the other as foreign, and to qualify in the House in the character repudiated while, and as, candidate?

35. Have you not published that the Act under which you claimed to affirm is the Freethinkers' Act, and that you claimed under it as such ?

36. Had you pledged yourself to be the banner-bearer of the party of the Atheistic cause in Parliament ?

37. Did you receive subscriptions in this capacity for this purpose ?

38. Did you describe yourself to the party—your own Secular supporters—as the Freethought candidate ?

39. Did you describe yourself to Northamptoners as not a Freethought nor Atheistic candidate, but only as a Radical ?

40. Did you get money for your expenses from the party to represent their cause in Parliament, and get votes from the Northamptoners as not a representative of the cause, but of Northampton Liberalism ?

41. Did Atheists pay your way in as an Atheist representative, and did Northamptoners vote you in as not such, and did you in the House affirm as such ?

42. Did you declare to the party—your Atheistic followers—that as Atheist you fought the borough, and did you tell Northamptoners that you did not fight the borough as Atheist, but purely and solely as Radical ?

43. Did you always teach on your propagandist platform that Atheism was the only possibility of true politics, and of all political, social, and material improvement ; and did you tell Northamptoners that Atheism was a mere speculative view and minor consideration ?

44. Did you, with intimate knowledge of the Evidence Amendment Acts, before being elected, announce that you would “be obliged” to swear, or to that effect ; and did you, after being elected, say that you thought you were not obliged to swear, or to that effect ; and did you claim to affirm under what you name as the Freethinkers' Act ?

45. Did you, when proposing to take the oath, after having neglected to do so, and after having, at your own risk, affirmed instead, publish, as said by your partner, to the effect that for a man to promise to take the oath in order to get elected, and then refuse to take it when he has gained his object, was to take poor men's money to serve them in the House, and then to refuse to enter the House by a formula the law demands ?

46. Does not the preceding question exactly describe what you did on first entering the House? *

47. Does the poor men's money mentioned above mean the contributions of the Atheists to pay your election expenses in order to represent their cause?

48. Did you not promise to represent that Atheistic cause?

49. Did you receive £10 as representing that cause, after being elected for Northampton?

50. Did you publish the letter giving notice of that donation, and obtain £10 in the same representative capacity?

51. Did you not change front as to Atheism on the hustings and in the House, laying it aside as candidate, resuming it as representative, and again change front as to the oath, saying you would be obliged to swear, and also that you were not obliged?

52. Was not the result of all these professions and proceedings on your part started by the pretence that you had, or thought you had, a right to affirm, that you served Northampton only five months out of six years, through obstacles put by yourself in your own way to serve some other cause, namely, the cause which you resumed in the House, and which you had disclaimed on the hustings as foreign to your candidature?

53. Had you any doubt as to whether you had the right to swear?

54. Did you know that the door was open to you into the House, and did you close that door by saying that you thought you had a right to enter by another, namely affirmation, and did you thus risk Northampton's rights on a mere whim or caprice, and to please the Atheistic party, by "planting its banner in front of the Speaker's desk" by the claim to affirm as Freethinker?

55. Having thus set aside or sold the right of Northampton to be represented by you, did you engineer a "Constitutional Rights Fund" and live, at least in part, professedly defending the right you had sold?

The questions Nos. 56 to 71 relate to the remarkable book published under the name of Adolphe S. Headingley, an author who has never disclosed his or

* *Vile National Reformer*, 12th June 1882, p. 475.

her individuality. The book was an attempt to elevate the hero into a class which could not be reached by the ordinary literature of the Secular party. The arts of the American Barnum were therefore utilised to elevate notoriety into popularity. Had Mr Bradlaugh boldly written the book as an autobiography, the world would have accepted it as the author's tribute to the author's vanity. But there is a feeling which jars upon cultivated minds when a prominent individual descends to the level of writing himself up under the veil of a *nom de plume* or a *nom de guerre*.

56. Does the Biography of Charles Bradlaugh, published by Messrs Remington, and issued as by the authorship of Adolphe S. Headingley, contain any information not obtained from you?

57. Was not that work compiled under your direction from sources you indicated, and from statements you made to the nominal author?

58. Could Adolphe Headingley write anything about you from any independent source, and, if so, from what source, and what part of the said Biography, if any, was so obtained?

59. Could not yourself as appropriately have put your own name to the book as author?

60. Have you not published that the facts were in the main from sources indicated by Mr Bradlaugh, and that otherwise, namely, beyond supplying "the facts," "Mr Bradlaugh is unconnected with the publication?"*

61. Have you endorsed that book as "A. S. Headingley's very accurate Biography?"†

62. Should not the Book be called *Auto-Biography*?

63. Is there anything in it not communicated by you, and, if so, what?

64. Have you written or published of Headingley as "telling the

* *Vide National Reformer*, 12th September 1880, p. 217.

† *National Reformer*, 20th November 1881, p. 401.

story of his—namely, your—life simply and graphically, from Hackney to Westminster?”*

65. Could Headingley have told the public this tale if you had not first told it to him for reproduction as a book of his own?

66. Does not Headingley, the nominal author of that biography, confirm by his confessions your account that you are the source of all he writes or copies?

67. What was the motive for employing any other publishing house than your own to issue that biography of yourself?

68. Have you not attempted to show, or edited and published to the effect, that Headingley is an independent writer and critic, that he does not favour or attack your opinions, but is impartial, and is all this true?†

69. Was not the work written and published to illustrate and prove your sincerity, your honesty, your uncompromising fidelity to your convictions?

70. Was it not intended as a testimonial to yourself, and is it not in effect a testimonial to yourself by yourself?

71. Was not the use of his name as author, and the employment of other publishers than yourself and partner, a method of “throwing the public off the scent,” giving a fictitious value to the testimony, and so partaking of the nature of a “sell?”

The publication of the so-called Headingley biography must have seriously damaged the reputation of Mr Bradlaugh, as well as the early fables of his being driven away from his home by paternal unkindness and priestly tyranny. It is evident that those statements made by himself, and repeated in this pseudo-biography, have been highly coloured, otherwise Mr Bradlaugh would not have permitted his character to be traduced, as the substance of those questions has been publicly uttered on hundreds of platforms, without

* *Vide National Reformer*, 15th August 1880, p. 157.

† *National Reformer*, 15th August 1880, p. 157.

any attempt being made to contradict the assertions in a court of law.

72. Did you say, in a debate at Sheffield, "Charles Bradlaugh began to think, and in his own name was foolish enough to publish his thinking. The Reverend John Graham Packer, pastor of St Peter's, Hackney Road, caused me to be expelled, wantonly and cruelly, from my home. I am not foolish enough to place in any man's hands the power to take my bread and cheese from me?"

73. Have you boasted that you sold more copies of that debate than were sold by the Christian side?

74. Did you publish your "thinkings" a year after you left home?

75. Did you give the above account of your father and your pastor in defence of your using the *alias* "Iconoclast," namely, that no man, by telling your employer of your Infidel lectures, should deprive you of your "bread and cheese?"

76. Have you not said, or endorsed the saying, that your employer was well acquainted with your Infidel opinions and lectures, and, being told of this by many persons, treated the accusation with the greatest contempt?

77. Was the above statement of your reason for using the *alias* "Iconoclast" true?

78. Were you not, according to your own account, perfectly safe on the "bread and cheese" question?

79. Was and is the statement about your father, under the instigation of Mr Packer, wantonly and cruelly expelling you from home, true?

80. Were you expelled, or did you run away? Have you said, "I left home and situation on the third day, and never returned to either?"

81. How far did you go, and where did you run to?

82. Could you count on your fingers the doors on the same side of the street between the house you left and the asylum you fled to, and how many fingers would you have to spare?

83. Was the distance above a stone-throw?

84. To whom did you go on leaving home? Why do you call the lady of the house Mrs Carlile?

85. Were you "engaged" there, when not studying for lectures,

etc., in making love to Hypatia Carlile, a daughter in the family you were "sheltered" by?

86. Have you ever said you were, for heretical opinions, driven from home and from all you held dear, and had you any opinions at all at that time, and did you not "hold dear" the one to whom you were "engaged in making love to"?

87. Have you not publicly said of that one, "She was the first girl I ever loved"?

88. Were you driven from home by tyranny, or were you drawn from home by love?

89. Have you said, or endorsed the saying, that you had one anxiety in this retreat, namely, lest you should be pursued and discovered by your parents?

90. Did you not put your coal-merchant card under your father's door, and did you not have your name placarded as Infidel lecturer, within sight of your father's door?

91. When you sold copies of a pamphlet containing an attack on your deceased father, did you not know whether the accusation was true or false?

92. Was it true?

93. Did you suddenly disappear from the Carlile retreat without one word from you, and enlist as a soldier, and pay your first debts out of the Queen's bounty and shilling?

94. How long was it before any of your "shelterers" saw you or heard from you? and under what circumstances did one meet you?

95. Did you, when sailing for Ireland as recruit, join in denouncing the captain of the vessel for not giving £5 to your fellow-recruits as a reward for shifting the cargo in order to save the ship, and their own lives, and yours?

96. Did you, when in Ireland, loose a savage dog, take or steal its kennel, carry it openly through the barrack yard, and present it as your tale of wood, or contribution to the fuel of the soldiers?

97. Have you not endorsed this tale, and did you not tell it yourself to Headingley as a part of your biography?

98. How did you get back from Ireland? Who purchased your discharge?

99. Have you represented that you inherited from a maternal aunt a legacy out of which you bought your discharge from the 7th Dragoon Guards, then in Ireland?

100. Was that legacy or bequest to you or to your mother or to your father?

101. Did your mother, about the time of your father's death, buy you off out of that legacy, or from other sources?

102. Does your brother, in his autobiography, deny as false your account of buying yourself off?

103. Did you, after the said purchase of discharge, profess to return home to help your then widowed mother?

104. Did you help your mother or your father before the legacy became due?

105. Did the money from the legacy "melt away" while you were helping your mother?

106. Did you after, or on occasion of, your being bought off, or when recording that part of your history by Headingley, accuse your parents of having treated you so badly that it was only a very good son like yourself who would think of helping your mother?

107. Have you not given proofs and confessions that your accusations of your parents were false?

108. Did you express any sorrow, pity, or gratitude in the account referring to your father's death, while you were soldiering?

109. Has the same suggestion been made, or is there ground for making the same, respecting any other case of deceased?

110. Did you not speak defamatory words of your deceased father, and your pastor, and did you not sell the report of your speech, and was the statement against your deceased father true?

111. For what purpose, and to secure what end, did you make those statements?

The charge made by the Rev. Brewin Grant that Mr Bradlaugh had sold causes as well as men, is set forth in paragraphs 112 to 155, which, although brief, are deserving of fuller investigation, which is furnished elsewhere. They throw considerable light upon the tactics employed by Mr Bradlaugh before he gained a seat in Parliament, and the talent for lobby engineering he evinced to get admitted into the House after he was elected.

112. Did you say and publish, "I want to be true; I try to be true; I have never been hypocrite to you (Northamptoners) nor to any man in this country, from the first day I began to speak"?

113. Did you find it difficult to be true? Were you successful in trying to be true? Did you exclude women and foreigners from this effort to be true?

114. Were you true to the baker's wife? Did you prevaricate with her about your Infidelity, in order to get an order for coals? Did you get 10s. weekly as commission on coals sold to her, and was this possible or proper? Could she be ignorant of your being an Infidel? Is the whole tale about her told by you to Headingley, and told by him for you, false?

115. Did you, in the case of this baker woman, trim your principles or your lamps?

116. Is not the Headingley Biography written to show that you were true to your principles, and that you suffered for your truth, and is it true or false that you did so suffer?

117. Were you true to the Queen in your American tour, or did you traduce her coarsely, on the ground of your application of the words of a Prime Minister.

118. Did another Prime Minister use the same words respecting Parliament, and were those words intended to call the members of Parliament idiots, or to that effect?

119. Were you true to Castelar in reporting what he is, by you, alleged to have said to you respecting Serrano?

120. Were you true to the Frenchman who challenged you to use your revolver, and had you said of him or of another Frenchman that he dared not say certain things about you while you were in France, or to that effect?

121. Why did you carry a revolver? and what did you do with it?

122. Did you say at Northampton that you had come there "to save your own interests, and that you never pretended otherwise"? *

123. Did you say that you sought the happiness of your wife, because in making her happiness you secured your own, or to that effect?

124. Have you told the poor that poverty is their own fault, that the remedy is in their own hands, by diminishing births?

125. Is not this your only remedy? Have you not sold this

* *National Reformer*, 15th November 1868, p. 310.

remedy by proposing what are palliatives and aggravations, avoiding the proposal openly of your real remedy?

126. Did you in effect sell or disappoint the fair expectations of a poor Freethinker, in refusing to give a free copy of your *Journal* in a time of distress?

127. Did you give as the reason for the refusal, that you could not live or pay for printing on a free circulation?

128. Did you not establish or adopt "a shilling fund" for free circulation, and get money for that, and did you not send, or profess to send, many copies to the clergy, who did not desire them?

129. Have you not boasted that you are supported by the poor men's pence, and did you refuse a free copy of your journal to a poor man in his distress?

130. How much money have you received for free circulation and general propagandist purposes, to be used at your own discretion on the condition of rendering no accounts?

131. How many funds of different sorts have you engineered "to serve your own interests"?

132. Have you written and published that you could not succeed in full adornment of your halls and your movement, till "an active Freethought propaganda shall have secured the people from the trammels of the Churches;" and "till then you cannot afford to dispense with active antagonism against the religion of the Churches"?

133. Did you state this or the like to the Northamptoners?

134. Have you movements in view or in progress which cannot be carried till you "knock the Bible leaves off the eyes of the people?"

135. Did you sell Atheism at the hustings as candidate for Northampton and resume it in the House as representative? or did you do this in effect, or in substance, or in fact?

136. Did you publish, in a leader by your partner, that the duty of a Freethinker in Parliament is "to efface every reference to God in public political affairs"?

137. "That this was his special duty as Freethinker, apart from all the other legislative work? It is his duty to strive to wipe out of political life every trace of religious belief"?

138. Was not this a violation of all your direct and implied pledges to Northampton?

139. Did the same person write, and did you publish, "the Freethinker can fairly claim that he shall be allowed to pass in as Mr Bradlaugh claims to do, as an avowed Atheist"?

140. Did not the same writer write, and did you not publish, that "you go in *not* as Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist, but as Charles Bradlaugh the Radical"?

141. Is this how "you wish to be true; you try to be true;" and is it not being false?

142. Have you ever tampered with soldiers, and advised them to join your National Secular Society, as secret passive members, promising that there is no danger of their being known, as you would keep their names secret?

143. Have you professed to advocate changes by peaceful means only, and have you often advocated or encouraged physical force?

144. Have you called the (Christian) God "an Almighty Fiend," and have you published a description of him as "an Almighty Monkey," as a "Ghastly Monster," and as an "impossible God," and have you undertaken to demonstrate that God cannot exist, and did you swear by God in the House of Commons?

145. Have you often sworn by God?

146. Did you swear to the Queen true allegiance, and did you say we will not be loyal to this German royalty?

147. Have you published many similar statements of disloyalty?

148. Did you swear loyalty to the House of Brunswick that you impeach?

149. Did you swear on the Book the New Testament, and kiss it, and have you called Jesus Christ coward, craven, and such like?

150. Have you linked Christianity with typhus fever, and say we try to remedy both?

151. Did you swear on and kiss the Book?

152. Did you, when you swore allegiance, betray Republicanism to the Crown, or the Crown to Republicanism?

153. Did you swear with a mental reservation of the right and purpose to disobey or repeal the law whose conditions of loyalty you swore to?

154. Did you propose forming a party in Parliament to repeal the law to whose conditions they would first have to swear to?

155. Have you defended Judas's act of betrayal as one of utility?

Following those queries, Mr Grant next challenges Mr Bradlaugh as to his "Sales of public men," more especially the way in which he alternately fawned upon

and denounced Mr John Bright and Mr W. E. Gladstone as it suited his private interest. With the great English tribune, Mr Bradlaugh was only too glad to receive a testimonial of political recognition. When, however, Mr Bright refused to associate his name with the moral filth in which Mr Bradlaugh has chosen to wallow—I mean Knowltonism—he vituperated the great Free Trader with no measured abuse. With Mr Gladstone he used different tactics; and, knowing the impressionable nature of this statesman, he has always been ready to become his vassal, and to enforce his servitude by threats if the expectant favours were not forthcoming. He might secure the political part of Mr Gladstone's conscience, but his ecclesiastical instincts rebelled at association with the Atheist who likened the Christian God to a gibbering baboon.

156. Did you, when candidating for Northampton, refer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, and on being asked what he thought of you, answer that you had a letter from him praising your pamphlet on the Irish Question?

157. Was this done when you wished to use his influence in your favour during the election?

158. Did you afterwards, when his influence in your favour was not immediately required, reproach him as hostile to your candidature, and as preventing or attempting to prevent your election, or to that effect?

159. Did you, when wishing to secure the Right Hon. John Bright's influence in your favour, or to negative his interference by letter against your election, say that you, in contradistinction from others, accepted the said John Bright's declaration as a man of honour that he was not hostile to you, that you accepted his word to this effect, and did you afterwards, when his influence was not required, say in effect that you did not take his word, and that he was really hostile to your candidature?

160. Did you give John Bright's letter, and that of Mr Gladstone, as an apology for your attack upon Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright?

161. Did you ever allege that you never had attacked either Mr Gladstone or Mr Bright except criticising their conduct in relation to your candidature, and that they never had been calumniated in your journal? Was this true?

162. Did you put John Bright into your pillory of poor Parliament men?

163. Have you not alternately vilified and praised him, according to your immediate advantage, to serve your own interests?

164. Did you complain of Whig and Tory writing against you, and of Mr Bright writing to prevent the return of a man so extreme, and of Mr Gladstone furnishing a certificate of character to the sitting members, one of whose seats you sought?*

165. Did you put John Bright in your pillory of poor Parliament men as "finality John"?†

166. Is he described in your Journal as having "lived a few months too long for his reputation as a Radical," either on account of the dining-room at Windsor Castle, or otherwise with other contemptuous expressions?‡

167. Did you write and publish "The evidence," namely, against Messrs Bright and Gladstone, "consists in the letters of Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright with reference to the Northampton election. In return, we exercise our right of criticising his (Mr Gladstone's) conduct"?§

168. Did you, during the election, deny that they were hostile, or to that effect?

169. Did you write and publish "'R. G. W.,' Worcester, writes that we have formerly calumniated Gladstone and Bright, and now eulogise them. 'R. G. W.' is mistaken; at no time since this journal has existed, have we ever calumniated either of these gentlemen." Is this true?||

170. Did you publish an article, 25th October 1868, that "he

* *National Reformer*, 14th March 1869, p. 166.

† *National Reformer*, 7th March 1869, p. 150.

‡ *National Reformer*, 17th August 1873.

§ *National Reformer*, 12th December 1869.

|| *National Reformer*, 5th September 1880, p. 201.

(John Bright) took upon himself to inferentially discredit Mr Bradlaugh's claims"?*

171. Did you afterwards complain "that even John Bright should have used his influence to keep us out of Parliament"?†

172. Did you, "as a man of honour," take his word of honour during the election time that he was not opposed to you?

173. Did you say of John Bright, in the election of 1868, "Mr Bradlaugh takes John Bright's word as a man, that he (John Bright) did not intend to take sides, and Mr Bradlaugh leaves it to Whig gentlemen to question John Bright's honour, while they try to use John Bright's influence"?‡

174. Did you afterwards accuse John Bright of the hostility and taking sides which you had denied when his influence might affect the election?

175. Did you do the same respecting Mr Gladstone?

176. Did you write of Mr Gladstone, saying, "you have left them (Englishmen) the right to doubt whether you have been just and fearless"?

177. Has it not been a departure from your declared policy of just fearlessness, which induced you to try to conciliate all parties and thus strive to win their support, neither have you been just and fearless on the question of compulsion?

178. Did you say that Mr Gladstone took up the Irish question and Agricultural Labourer's cause for place and power, and not from convictions, or to that effect?

179. That he betrayed his trust; and did you protest against his betrayal of his trust?

180. Did you write to Mr Gladstone these words, "For you personally I have great reverence and admiration,"§ when you wanted his assistance for an Affirmation Bill which you in effect said was not required, as you had the constitutional right and duty to swear?

181. Did you accuse Mr Gladstone of being false to his promises, of scarcely intending to fulfil them, and of using language of trickery, equivocation, and deceit, or to that effect?

* *National Reformer*, 25th October 1868, p. 258.

† *National Reformer*, 28th February 1869, p. 137.

‡ *National Reformer*, 11th October 1868, p. 228.

§ *National Reformer*, 10th July 1881, p. 49.

182. Have you not alternately lauded and vilified him, and have you not denied the vilification?

183. Did you, when Mr Gladstone refused an interview with you, as still further compromising his Government, inquire if you might publish the correspondence, and receive from him permission to publish?

184. Did you seek such permission before declaring that he had written to you in praise of your pamphlet on the Irish question?

185. Did you in America describe Mr Gladstone as in effect a conceited Republican? Did you, in reply to the question, How does Premier Gladstone view it? (the Republication Movement), say, "I think he foresees the possibility of wider things than he is prepared to maintain at present"?

186. Did you say of John Bright in America, "John Bright I regard as a finished man, as far as our politics are concerned," meaning that in 1874 he was done-up and played-out?

187. Did you say of Mr Gladstone, "I close this week's 'jottings' a little more proud of being an Englishman, and with a firmer admiration than ever of the G. O. M., who is England's Premier"?

188. Have you not alternately vilified and lauded Mr Gladstone according to your own political exigencies, and have you not said that he was never calumniated by you in your journal, and is this true?

189. Did you say of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, "Mr Gladstone's conversion to the cause of the Agricultural Labourer was as sudden as his conversion to the cause of Ecclesiastical and Land Reform in Ireland, and seemed more to be the designed means of continuing in power than the result of conscientious conviction"?*

190. Did you pronounce a private letter from Mr Gladstone, thanking you for a pamphlet on the Irish question, a testimonial in aid of your first candidature for Northampton?

191. Did you use as a testimonial to yourself, the word of a gentleman whom you defamed as unconscientious, on the very question on which you had encumbered him with your help?

192. Did you afterwards abuse him for having opposed your candidature?

193. Did you reveal an alleged private conversation between you

* *National Reformer*, 13th September 1873, p. 149.

and President Castelar in Spain, giving his alleged opinion on Serrano, which might compromise or endanger the said Castelar?

194. Did you go to Spain on a mission procured by you at a Birmingham Conference of casuals or professed representatives of English and other towns and districts to endorse the Spanish Republic and fulfil Mr Gladstone's lack of service to the new-fledged Republic in Spain?

195. Did you, on your journey in Spain, declare to the Carlist examiners of baggage, respecting your letter or address to Castelar, from the Birmingham Conference, that it was your passport, and was it not false to say so, if you did say so, or only wrote or published that you did say so?

196. Did you threaten your Spanish *calèche* driver, that you would shoot him if he voluntarily drove you into the Carlist ranks, and did you sit behind the said driver with your revolver on your knee?

197. How often have you in print flourished that revolver, and did it ever go off, by accident or otherwise?

198. Were you challenged to a duel by a Frenchman, and did you use the revolver in that case?

199. Did you adopt and insert in your journal a representation of Mr Gladstone as *Pilate*, vainly washing his hands over a *human sacrifice*, in which you were the VICTIM?

This remarkable catechism concludes with an accusation of "fake friendship," charging Mr Bradlaugh with the sale of his private friends who refused to bow to his imperious will, and worship at the shrine of his intense vanity.

200. Was Mr Charles Watts for a long time your friendly, loyal co-worker, and how long?

201. Was he one of three persons photographed with yourself and another as the Trinity—one and indivisible, or to that effect?

202. Was he a kind of legacy to your care from his brother, John Watts, who edited your journal about three years, while you were mainly engaged as secretary to a Knowltonian-Drysdale so-called Malthusian Company or Society?

203. Did you profess to purchase, by subscriptions of "the party,

a printing and publishing plant and business as a gift to Charles Watts, in recognition of his services?

204. What reason did you give for discarding him?

205. Did you quarrel with your first co-editor, Joseph Barker, and what about?

206. Did you describe Dr E. B. Aveling as your private secretary, did you admit many articles by him in your journal, adopt him as a lawfully recognised or ordained lecturer, speak highly of his services and your obligations to him, and afterwards discard him? *

207. What did you discard him for?

208. Did you early express your gratitude to Mr G. J. Holyoake as your patron and leader, and did you boast in America that you were now leader?

209. Did Mr Holyoake complain of your conduct to him while you were in America, and what for?

210. Have you had money differences and arbitrations as to the said Mr G. J. Holyoake, and with what results?

211. Have you sometimes used him as a proof of the unity of the party, and more times indicated your hostility to him?

I conclude this dialectic inquiry with the remark that the public would have been much edified had Mr Bradlaugh dared to have gone into the witness-box to submit himself to a cross-examination by the defendant in the action *Bradlaugh v. Grant*, and it shows the consummate ability by which, in all legal duels he has entered, he has picked out his antagonists. No inducement, however, would make Mr Bradlaugh meet an antagonist upon a question of libel, when the issue would be the career of the honourable member.

* To this may now be added the question: Did you adopt Mr T. Evan Jacob as a lawfully recognised or ordained lecturer, and does he now act in that capacity; and, if not, why not?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mr Bradlaugh's proffered Alliance repudiated by Leaders of the National Sunday League—Ignored by other Radicals—What the Socialists think of his "Trimming"—The Political Conduct of the NATIONAL REFORMER—Mr Bradlaugh's Connection with the Reform League—Rejected by the Agricultural Labourers' Movement—Mr Bradlaugh and the Electoral Reform Movement—Irish Nationalists object to His Alliance, etc.

IT is a remarkable fact that the leaders and wire-pullers of political and social movements have instinctively repudiated the proffered alliance of Mr Bradlaugh, whose great ambition has always been to patronise organisations in which he could bring the weight of his personality into new spheres of influence. Amongst the various social agitations which seem to be nearest akin to Infidelity, the movement for the secularisation of Sunday appears to offer the strongest reasons for an active co-operation with Secularism, but even the National Sunday League shrank from the proffered aid of Mr Bradlaugh. They were afraid that even *their* lax method of spending the Sabbath would prove detrimental, for propagandist purposes, from contiguity with Secularism, and the League made no secret of saying that the advocacy of Mr Bradlaugh "was powerfully obstructive of progress."

The Editor of the *National Reformer* having been

thus snubbed, wrote an indignant letter, in which he said,—

“We regret that Mr G. Mayer, of the Eastern Branch of the National Sunday League, should, *in order to gain favour* from the religious party, have written to the *East London Observer* a letter relating to ourselves, which he ought to have known was not true in any particular. The Sunday League can be, and has been, very useful ; but it depends chiefly for its existence on the Freethought party, and should be ashamed of trying to curry favour by a policy of hypocrisy.”

In like manner the Republican agitators, outside the Secularist camp, repudiated Mr Bradlaugh's help. When Sir Charles Dilke started the Republican idea, and inaugurated a campaign by several public meetings, Mr Bradlaugh's ostentatious offers of support were simply ignored. In revenge, he summoned his “Conference of Casuals” to give him a pretext for a roving commission to Madrid. He there confessed that “the stigma” of his theological opinions would “obstruct progress” in Republican advocacy. He intimates the same in these words,—

“We should still be glad if *others* took the lead in a central organisation ; but if nothing is done, we shall act ourselves.”—(Oct. 6, 1872, p. 217). It is professedly because no one else untainted with the fatality of Atheistic obstructiveness will take up the Republican cause, that he does it. “If those gentlemen,” referring to “Sir C. Dilke and Mr Odger,” “had done this, they would have had our loyal support ; but they not having taken any public steps” towards “a national union of the various political and republican organisations, we had determined to delay no longer,”—(November 2, 1872, p. 281), and so he unfurled his Republican banner.

The leaders of the Socialist agitation from the first have spoken in no uncertain strain respecting Mr Bradlaugh's sincerity. Whether rightly or wrongly, they

believe him to have trimmed his conduct solely with a view to become a "placeman" under Government. His denunciations against "Perpetual Pensions" and the ordinary rôle of subjects in which a "patriot" trades, they consider to have been entered upon only as a means of enhancing his purchaseable value, and to obtain a rank above the ordinary run of an Under-Secretary; as he tells all his friends that he considers himself above any post except the head of a department. Unfortunately for his peace of mind, he has constantly held himself out as the equal of such men as Mr Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, as being worthy of Cabinet rank, and the Socialists have never relished the idea of Mr Bradlaugh's becoming the *Right Hon.* Mr Bradlaugh, although his esoteric disciples would be content with *Sir* Charles Bradlaugh. Accordingly, when he originally bestowed his patronage on the Socialists, they were ungenerous enough to spurn his proffered assistance. When he admitted to earning £1000 per year by his tongue and pen, and when the Socialists discovered that he was an investor to the tune of many thousands of pounds in foreign securities, they considered he could have no *bonâ fide* sympathy with labourers at fifteen shillings a week. They then openly denounced his political advocacy, and there is scarcely a Socialist meeting where his name is not mentioned with loathing, and his behaviour shunned, as affording a demoralising example of a self-seeking political adventurer trading on the miseries of the people, in order to secure a political position with a big salary. The

Socialists have long memories of historic demagogues. They couple the political acts and social teachings of such men as John Wilkes and William Cobbett together. They know that Wilkes was once the most popular man in England, even when he was the author of the most shameful and demoralising book of his age. They have never forgotten that William Cobbett made, for many years, an enormous income out of the poor, while professing to be the poor man's advocate. They know that the two great Irish politicians, Daniel O'Connell (in Ireland) and Fergus O'Connor (in England), received princely revenues from the pence of the most poverty-stricken toilers of the empire, as the result of trading on the ignorance of the poor. Observing the career of Mr Bradlaugh, they have predicated that similar causes would produce similar effects. As a body, the Socialists have no respect for Mr Bradlaugh. In this they have been assisted by a popular organ which influences the political opinions of the poor quite as much as the *Times* moulds the opinions of the rich. *Reynolds's Newspaper* has lost no opportunity of denouncing the *bonâ fides* of Mr Bradlaugh. The readers of this journal are not the class of agitators who attend "monster demonstrations." They are composed of small shopkeepers and the tailors and shoemakers who stop at home and *think*. They look suspiciously upon all politicians, and have long come to the conclusion that Mr Bradlaugh is "trimming" for a place. They would forgive him if this were done in the interests of their order, and with the co-operation of

members of Parliament who would form a Radical cabinet by Radical men apart from hereditary legislators. But they know that Mr Bradlaugh considers himself to be immeasurably above such political contemporaries as Mr Howell, Mr Cremer, Mr Rowlands, or any other of the pseudo-labour members. It is not therefore a matter to be surprised at if they take every chance of publishing their opinion that Mr Bradlaugh has long been for sale, and they irreverently say that when his tongue gets purchased by the Radical section of a Whig Government, he will be as mute as was many other distinguished politicians after they received official salaries.

There is, however, a curious arrangement in reference to Secularism between the male and female editors of the *National Reformer*, which reminds one of those quiet family arrangements in the troubled times of the Hanover and Stuart dynasties, when it was doubtful whether "the King over the water" might not "come to his own again," and when there was a probability of confiscating the estate, the landlord in possession would stick to the Georges, while the heir would declare for the Jacobite Pretender. By this balancing of interests, whichever side was in power, the estate was secured to the family. In a similar manner, while Mr Bradlaugh in one part of the *National Reformer* is an anti-Socialist whose speeches denouncing Communistic proclivities are complimented by Lord Wemyss in the House of Lords, we find that Mrs Besant is advocating Socialistic views in the same journal, and the natural inference is that this is a private arrange-

ment so as not to cause a secession of the Secularistic Socialists. Mrs Besant uses a deal of tact in carrying out this portion of the *business* partnership programme, and Mr Bradlaugh relies upon his invectives against Messrs Champion, Hyndman, and Burns as a powerful lever towards obtaining a position in a Liberal Government, with Cabinet rank. This is his revenge for having been repudiated by the Socialists, and is strictly in consonance with his practice through life, the assumption that patriotism can be worked to a profit, but that the end of patriotism is—place.

In the autobiography of Mr Bradlaugh, great stress is laid upon the services which he rendered to the Reform League. It is quite true that he frequently spoke at meetings, and it is equally true that his help was not approved by many who assisted Mr Edmond Beales, M.A., in that agitation, which ended by that elderly briefless barrister being rewarded with a county court judgeship. Mr Bradlaugh says :—

“ I was one of its vice-presidents, and continued nearly the whole time of its existence a member of its executive. The whole of my services and journeys were given to the League without the slightest remuneration, and I repeatedly, and according to my means, contributed to its funds. When I resigned my position on the executive, I received from Mr George Howell, the secretary, and from Mr Beales, the president, the most touching and flattering letters as to what Mr Beales was pleased to describe as the loyalty and utility of my services to the League. Mr George Howell concluded a long letter as follows :—‘ Be pleased to accept my assurance of sincere regard for your manly courage, consistent and honourable conduct in our cause, and for your kindly consideration for myself as secretary of this great movement, on all occasions.’ These letters have additional value from the fact that Mr Beales whom I sincerely respect, differs widely from

me in matters of faith, and Mr Howell is, fortunately, far from having any friendly feeling towards me."

The fact, however, was that Mr Bradlaugh received unmistakable hints that his services did more harm than good.

"THE REFORM LEAGUE was obliged to save itself by getting rid of his alliance. Mr Beales 'only *deplored* that Mr Bradlaugh's *anti-theological opinions*—which Mr Beales stated had never been mixed with his advocacy on the Reform League platform—should *render the resignation* ADVISABLE.' So Mr Bradlaugh resigned his position as Vice-President of the Reform League, where his 'Anti-theology' was so useless as never to be 'mixed' with political advancement, and yet so flagrant as to render his 'resignation advisable,' in the opinion of 'friend' Edmond Beales, M.A."

Mr Bradlaugh might well consider that it was an unkind cut to be cashiered by such friends as Dr Baxter Langley, who desisted from his candidature at Greenwich to accommodate Mr Gladstone, and Mr Odger, who in like manner disposed of seats he could not win. Mr Bradlaugh, however, performed the "happy despatch" with expedition and dignity when he discovered that if he delayed the process a motion would be made to request him to send in his resignation for "the good of the cause."

Another organisation which felt the inconvenience of Mr Bradlaugh's association was the Agricultural Labourers' Movement. The friends of this cause considered his patronage a positive injury. Mr Joseph Arch objected to speak on the same platform with Mr Bradlaugh. Mr Samuel Morley asked him, as a personal favour, not to obtrude himself at a meeting at St

James' Hall, lest his presence should drive away persons who objected to stand on the same platform, and whose influence was valuable to the movement. Mr Bradlaugh peevishly complained that the representatives of the Agricultural Labourers entirely ignored the help received from his friends at the commencement of their agitation. It is reported that at one meeting Mr George Potter and his few friends yelled lustily; Joseph Arch begged as a favour not to irritate the kindly gentlemen (Samuel Morley and others) who were disposed to aid the poor labourers. Mr Ball, another agricultural advocate, came forward and said they did not want any political opinions which might prevent subscriptions to the movement. Mr Bradlaugh even offered to lead the party, and said, "We are ready, actively and thoroughly, to assist with our presence when the men wish our interference. Joseph Arch is a good man, but it requires a very strong man." Mrs Besant came to Mr Bradlaugh's assistance, and delivered herself thus: "Joseph Arch would have had his hands strengthened if he had been wise enough to take counsel with men more experienced, of wider brains, and stronger nature. The land laws require a touch, but it is a touch of a bigger hand than that of Joseph Arch." When present at one of the meetings, Cardinal Manning significantly left the hall when Mr Bradlaugh rose to speak. This, and several objections to Mr Bradlaugh's alliance, caused his proffered help to be indignantly rejected.

The Electoral Reform Movement was approved of by Mr Bradlaugh, and he offered to become its champion on the platform. There was a conference, in which Mr Chamberlain attended and presided as chairman. A number of extreme Radicals were present, as well as Mr Bradlaugh, but those gentlemen were placed in a dilemma by the presence of the Infidel leader, and the result manifested itself in a desire to overlook the merits of Mr Bradlaugh, who wrote in his journal, "We were REQUESTED by the chairman NOT TO SPEAK, and, although loudly called for, we *of course gave way* to the conveners of the meeting." This showed more resignation than he had observed at the Agricultural Labourers' meeting; but as soon as it was surmised that Mr Bradlaugh was a friend to the movement, it collapsed.

It is needless to multiply instances of similar occurrences. Mr Bradlaugh has always done his utmost to put himself in evidence in any movement where his intense individuality could be exercised or his egotism gratified. In popular assemblies, where he can exhibit his rough eloquence, he considers himself repaid by the attention he secures from an ignorant audience; and amongst the miners of the Northern coalfields he has always been extremely popular, by posing as an Atlas who would bear all their wrongs on his shoulders when he obtained admittance to Parliament. But the miners have at last discovered that the policy of antagonism to their employers has proved a gigantic failure—the vast sums

of money levied by self-inflicted taxes have been squandered in political speculations, in which Mr Bradlaugh has been a sympathetic adviser, and now they are inclined to strike down the brazen statue they have erected to the modern Dagon.

The Irish Nationalists, in like manner, although glad to receive his Parliamentary support, have from the first shrunk from personal association with Mr Bradlaugh. While every other English or Scotch member has been warmly welcomed in Ireland as an advocate for the National cause, there has been no invitations to the Infidel representative of Northampton. It is no secret that Mr Parnell has repudiated his alliance, and the Roman Catholic prelates would not associate on the same platform with the advocate who has expressed his antagonism to the religious instincts of Ireland in such objectionable language. It is not because Mr Bradlaugh is a political Atheist, for there are many Neologists who are respected by the most bigoted of Irish priests, but it arises from the fact that any support which might be received from such a source would recoil against the party, and they view his coarse theological advocacy with such horror that they shrink even from personal contact with him.

CHAPTER XXV.

How Mr Bradlaugh's Irish Policy has fluctuated—Connected with Fenianism—Alleged to Mr Morrison Davidson and Others that He drew up the Fenian Manifesto; and subsequently denounced Mr Davidson as "a Liar" for repeating His Statements—Copy of Irish Republican Proclamation—Improbable that Mr Bradlaugh could have been its Author—Denouncing Fenianism, and at the same time palliating the Murder of Brett—Wire-pulling and "Trimming," etc.

MR BRADLAUGH'S policy in reference to Ireland has undergone many changes, as his interests inclined to revolution or reform. At the earliest date, when Mr Isaac Butt, M.P., was, after a considerable absence from Parliament, engaged in organising the Home Rule party subsequent to the dissolution of "the Pope's Brass Band," led for so long by Mr Maguire, Mr Bradlaugh inclined to Fenianism. As soon as Fenianism began to be dangerous, Mr Bradlaugh turned tail against Messrs Cluseret and Kelly, and sought to secure his safety from a possible prosecution by denouncing his colleagues. Irish disaffection was originally frowned down by the priests, when priests were of a different social calibre to the ordinary Irish peasants who wear black coats at the present day. Until Sir Robert Peel endowed Maynooth, every Roman Catholic ecclesiastic had to study at Douay or at Rome. It was then only the sons of the middle and professional classes

who could provide the expenses of such an education, and a priest was then necessarily a gentleman. All this was altered when Queen's College allowed the priests to be manufactured out of the raw material of the sons of Irish *teagues*. A new race sprang up, in sympathy with the peasantry, with whom they were identical. Still there was no real disaffection amongst either the Irish peasantry or the priests till the close of the American Civil War liberated an immense Celtic element, which commenced to plot against the British Government. When the Fenian Movement broke out, it was decidedly a secular movement, and, as usual, Mr Bradlaugh naturally dabbled in petty treason.

To do this latter gentleman justice, in all his Republican manifestoes, he has never professed to act for either Ireland or Scotland. He is sufficiently modest in his ambition, to be content with the appointment of first permanent President of the English Republic. Still he was desirous of acting as Grand Protector for the Fenian *déchéance* of Castle rule, and he caused it to be known that the document issued by the Fenian leaders was drafted by himself; and the inevitable Irish spies adopted this hypothesis. So that no injustice may be done to Mr Bradlaugh, a copy of the Irish Republican Proclamation is here appended:—

“IRISH REPUBLICAN PROCLAMATION !—THE IRISH PEOPLE TO THE WORLD.

“WE have suffered centuries of outrage, enforced poverty, and bitter misery. Our rights and liberties have been trampled on by an alien aristocracy, who, treating us as foes, usurped our lands, and drew

away from our unfortunate country all material riches. The real owners of the soil were removed to make room for cattle, and driven across the ocean to seek the means of living, and the political rights denied to them at home; while our men of thought and action were condemned to loss of life and liberty. But we never lost the memory and hope of a national existence. We appealed in vain to the reason and sense of justice of the dominant powers. Our mildest remonstrances were met with sneers and contempt. Our appeals to arms were always unsuccessful. To-day, having an honourable alternative left, we again appeal to force as our last resource. We accept the conditions of appeal, manfully deeming it better to die in the struggle for freedom than to continue an existence of utter serfdom. All men are born with equal rights, and in associating together to protect one another, and share public burdens, justice demands that such associations should rest upon a basis which maintains equality instead of destroying it. We therefore declare that, unable longer to endure the curse of monarchical government, we aim at founding a republic, based on universal suffrage, which shall secure to all the intrinsic value of their labour. The soil of Ireland, at present in the possession of an oligarchy, belongs to us, the Irish people, and to us it must be restored. We declare also in favour of absolute liberty of conscience, and the complete separation of Church and State. We appeal to the Highest Tribunal for evidence of the justice of our cause. History bears testimony to the intensity of our sufferings, and we declare, in the face of our brethren, that we intend no war against the people of England; our war is against the aristocratic locusts, whether English or Irish, who have eaten the verdure of our fields,—against the aristocratic leeches who drain alike our blood and theirs. Republicans of the entire world, our cause is your cause. Our enemy is your enemy. Let your hearts be with us. As for you, workmen of England, it is not only your hearts we wish, but your arms. Remember the starvation and degradation brought to your firesides by the oppression of labour. Remember the past, look well to the future, and avenge yourselves by giving liberty to your children in the coming struggle for human freedom. *Herewith we proclaim the Irish Republic.*

“THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.”

Not only at the time of the issue of the proclamation

was the intimation given by Mr Bradlaugh that he was one of the triumvirate, along with Kelly and Cluseret, but at a later date he stated that he was the actual author of the document. He now, however, finds it convenient to repudiate the authorship of the seditious manifesto. When Mr Morrison Davidson, a journalist of singular ability, went to interview Mr Bradlaugh for his monograph on "Eminent Radicals," Mr Bradlaugh distinctly told his interviewer, as one of his qualifications for leadership, that he had personally prepared the Fenian proclamation. This statement was also made by Mr Bradlaugh to other gentlemen who are not altogether unknown to fame. When, however, he made his peace with Mr Gladstone, he found it convenient to deny the fact that he had ever made such an assertion; and, in his own polite language, he has thought fit to denounce Mr Morrison Davidson "a Liar." Imagine the modern Ananias accusing any gentleman of mendacity! The presumption is that Mr Bradlaugh was speaking falsely when he took credit for the composition of the proclamation. The probable falsehood may have been uttered in order to curry favour with the Intransigentes, for the style in which the document is written is superior to anything of which Mr Bradlaugh (unaided) is capable. It is indeed very probable that he was "lying" when he, to Mr Morrison Davidson, admitted the authorship; and, that now the Irish priests have taken the side of the National party, that he has received his orders to moderate his language on Irish questions, so as to keep in line

with the Radical Party, as it is 'strikingly evident that the Irish Nationalists reject with loathing the aid offered by a man whose life is an insult to their faith.

At one time Fenianism was considered to be a great public peril, and when the Clerkenwell prison was blown up, there was a danger of a prosecution, which Mr Bradlaugh was determined to keep clear of, as far as he personally was concerned. He had a difficult task on hand, as he aspired to play with fire without getting burnt. He sat upon the fence. He denounced the Clerkenwell attempt to blow up the prison wall, so as to satisfy the authorities, in case proceedings might be taken against him, while he, at the same time, endeavoured to conciliate the rank and file of Fenianism, by palliating the atrocity of the murder of Brett, which he did in these words,—

"Hitherto the Irish disaffected have refrained from reckless life-taking; the killing of Brett, however deplorable, was the result of the intention to rescue the illegally-held prisoners at all costs, and was not, if judged from the Fenian point of view, a wanton and useless sacrifice of human life."

Those of the English public who do not read Mr Bradlaugh's journal, will learn with surprise that the deliberate shooting of a police sergeant was only an "intention to rescue the illegally held prisoners." This was Mr Bradlaugh's opinion in the days when he had no immediate prospect of becoming a cabinet minister; and, in order to magnify his importance, he gave it out that his house "was watched day and night, both in

front and behind, by police in private clothes, while two extra policemen in full uniform were kept constantly on guard at the door of the neighbouring railway station, where Bradlaugh passed each time he went to town." The biographer of the modern Ananias must have been very credulous. If there were any persons about Sunderland Villa, "both in front and behind," they were simply sheriff's officers, or county court bailiffs, and the only extra policemen who attended in the neighbourhood of Mr Bradlaugh's residence were intent upon levying warrants for parochial rates; and, in fact, there was no back entrance which could be watched. But all this served its purpose when manufactured into heroics for consumption amongst his credulous followers. It brought in the coppers which were wanted to purchase investments in "the Grand Book of the Kingdom of Italy," against the time when the Right Hon. Mr Bradlaugh should be in a position to repeat the aphorism of his prototype, John Wilkes, "But, may it please your Majesty, I was never a Bradlaughite, nor had I ever any feeling but that of contempt for the idiots who made me a political hero."

At present, Mr Bradlaugh finds it answers his purpose to declaim in regard to the wrongs of Ireland. He obeys implicitly the "whip" of the Separatists, and mixes but little with the Nationalist M.P.'s, who are ready to use his venal tongue, but will as strongly resist payment of the price he expects to receive for his advocacy, as they did his entrance into the Commons.

He is treated by them with contemptuous indifference, and he carefully avoids any missionary enterprise in Ireland, where the men still believe in God, and where the women are still unpolluted with the "syringes" advertised and recommended in his journal, with prurient exactness, but most likely with monetary profit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Question of an Unstamped Press—Mr Bradlaugh called upon to find Sureties to the Extent of £400 against the Publication of Blasphemy and Sedition in His Journal—Refuses, and “defies” the Government—Inland Revenue v. Bradlaugh—A Splendid Advertisement for Mr Bradlaugh—The Fight over the Freedom of the Press beneficial to Mr Bradlaugh.

DURING the past two centuries there has been a succession of disputes as to the right of English politicians to the use of newspapers free from the sometimes prohibitive fiscal censorship of a stamped press. Daniel Defoe was the first and Richard Carlile was the last of a race of popular leaders who had a *bonâ fide* fight with Government on the subject of a stamped press. Mr G. J. Holyoake and Mr C. D. Collett incurred heavy penalties for publishing “unstamped” papers, during the intermittent prosecutions of the Government against those publishers who issued popular literature influencing public opinion at a cheap rate; but there has not been, within the last forty years, any *bonâ fide* press prosecution. Men who could afford to pay fines in contravention of an Act of Parliament, never played at the game of martyrdom, because, without difficulty, a penniless adventurer, who had no goods upon which an execution could be levied, was always at hand

to defy the Government and fight the battle for his pecunious neighbour. When the Crown decided that no more "flying stationers" should be sent to jail, it was comparatively easy to be pot-valorous, as every person knew that the threats of the Stamp Office were but the ebullitions of official routine.

Besides the Stamp Duty, there was yet another embargo placed upon the efforts of popular journalism, in the shape of a heavy monetary surety which had to be given to Government for each journal, and to be forfeited in the event of the journal's publishing anything which might be found to be blasphemous or seditious. In 1868, after having allowed their claim to lapse for several years, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue made a demand on Mr Bradlaugh to give sureties against the publication of sedition and blasphemy, pursuant to an Act passed in 1819 to put down Carlile's journal and Cobbett's *Political Register*. Those who are familiar with the prosecutions which raged against the unstamped press, after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, when the inflation of prices was suddenly destroyed and distress became the normal condition of the agricultural population, will have some idea of the great dissatisfaction which prevailed in England, and afforded a safe platform for political agitators to vend their wares through the press. The Act then passed was intended to catch William Cobbett, and, to a certain extent, it succeeded in its aim. But of late years it has become practically obsolete. It was therefore considered by Mr Bradlaugh to be an excellent advertisement to be

publicly called upon to find sureties, to the extent of £400, for his good behaviour as regarded loyalty to the Crown and reverence for the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. When a publisher has no outward and visible signs of wealth, except a copyright, which he can make over to a friend within a quarter of an hour, he fears not the penalty of £20 for every issue of his paper—the fine for each unlawful publication. As soon as Lord Beaconsfield's Government came into power, it made the blunder of singling out the *National Reformer* for prosecution. With the instinct of an advertising agent, Mr Bradlaugh, in reply to an application to stop the sale of his paper, announced in large type on the front page of his *National Reformer*, "Printed in defiance of Her Majesty's Government." This notice revived the interest of the old committees which were formerly in touch with Mr Milner Gibson's societies for the abolition of stamp duties on newspapers, and also that numerous class of persons who are ready to support any movement which may be against the Government. It was some fifteen years previous to 1868 since any such attack had been made upon a newspaper or journal as was now being made, and the last press prosecution which preceded that against the *National Reformer* was directed only against the *Reasoner*, which Mr Holyoake edited with genteel, rhetorical, and essay-like shrieks. Mr Holyoake boasted that he had incurred penalties to the extent of some half a million pounds by the sale of

condemned literature. The addition of a few cyphers to the right of the initial figure of pounds which represented the amount of Mr Holyoake's liability, made little or no difference to him, because he well knew that he could not pay half a million of farthings; so the proceedings against him had been, financially, innocuous. The Government department which was responsible for the Inland Revenue would have been only too glad to have ignored Mr Bradlaugh's journal; but they could not be "defied" with impunity; and so, in an unlucky hour, they took legal steps to declare that the *National Reformer* must pay the penalties for the annoyance given to their particular department. Instead of commencing an action against Mr Bradlaugh by the issue of a writ to recover what was alleged to be due, the Government put in motion the Attorney-General, who filed an information alleging breaches of the law which—if they could but be maintained, and if Mr Bradlaugh had had sufficient capital—were of so grave a nature as to render the offending journalist liable to a fine sufficiently large to pay off a very considerable portion of the National Debt. To meet the foe, Mr Bradlaugh adopted his usual course. He got his law upon payment from those who were well qualified to advise him; and, when the case came before the Court, he was his own advocate. By this means, he obtained the notoriety he desired, and achieved a reputation as a lawyer which was totally unmerited. The public, who failed to understand that the law of the action was

prepared for him, gave Mr Bradlaugh credit for having worked up his own defence. He made good capital out of the perfunctory way in which the Crown case was brought forward. The omission of a date caused the process to be withdrawn, and a technical victory was gained by Mr Bradlaugh. With other technicalities, however, in which an old and musty statute of James I. was invoked, the Attorney-General was again set to work by the Crown. The statute of James I. had been fossilised in legal text-books, and when it came to be searched for, there was not, at first, any record discovered that such a statute existed. Mr Bradlaugh's legal advisers told him to insist upon the re-insertion of four pleas which had been struck out by the Crown.

The application came before Mr Justice Willes, who permitted Mr Bradlaugh to raise the pleas he required in his defence. The copy of the Act of James I. was at length discovered, and further technical processes were argued for and against the Crown. Mr Bradlaugh's advertising efforts were rewarded with success. The leaders of the old agitation of 1855 for the Repeal of Taxes on Knowledge, came to the front. Mr Gibson and Mr Ayrton, who had had many a Parliamentary fight over this question, took up the cause of Mr Bradlaugh in the House of Commons, and John Stuart Mill lent the aid of his pen in denouncing the conduct of the Government. The entire press was against the action of the Inland Revenue, not because the person attacked

was Mr Bradlaugh, but because it was known that the freedom of every journal and newspaper was more or less imperilled. Ample subscriptions were forthcoming to fight the battle of an unstamped press.

At last the information came on for trial before Mr Baron Martin, when it became evident that the Treasury lawyers cared but little for the issue at stake. Had they considered it to be of much moment, they would have brought their case into court in a complete state ready for trial, taking every precaution which is necessary to make a Crown prosecution successful. But, on the contrary, they did not summon even a proper special jury panel; and when it was discovered that a sufficient number of special jurors were not present to try the case, the prosecution did not avail themselves of a method by which they could have completed the deficiency in the number of special jurymen, by making a selection from a common panel. Under the pretext that the special jury was incomplete, the Treasury elected to abandon the proceedings against Mr Bradlaugh.

About eight months afterwards, when Mr Gladstone succeeded Mr Disraeli another attempt was made to reopen the question. The Liberal law officers of the Crown met with the same difficulty that had been encountered by their Tory predecessors. They professed to be magnanimous, and did not strive to inflict further penalties, which had by that time amounted to about four or five millions. They would have been content to accept an undertaking for providing sureties; for, by

such a method, a precedent would have been formed, after which it would be comparatively easy to suppress any obnoxious newspaper or journal. Mr Bradlaugh says he allowed them to have a verdict at *nisi prius*, being conscious that he could set them right *in banco*. It appears that in the last action the Crown had not given proof of the proprietorship of the journal, as required by statute. Mr Bradlaugh had written a letter, on the 10th April, to the Inland Revenue department, acknowledging that he was the proprietor of the *National Reformer*, upon which the Crown had taken no steps to provide evidence of the fact.

Upon this technicality he obtained a rule. The friends of the party who had always been in favour of repealing the taxes on knowledge, then brought a Bill into Parliament to repeal the enactments. The Bill was passed without engendering hostile discussion. Then the Treasury solicitor informed Mr Bradlaugh that he was prepared to enter a *set processus*. No further proceedings were, therefore, entered into, and the matter was accordingly ended. The real victors were Mr Milner Gibson, who had always been in favour of the abolition of fetters on the freedom of the press; Mr John Bright, and with him the whole of the Manchester party. Amongst the philosophic Radicals, John Stuart Mill did the lion's share of the little fighting that was required to free the press from the shackles of an antique and almost forgotten law. In times past, the statute had been used against Cobbett, Taylor, Carlile, and many

others, who spent years in prison in defence of the right of publishing unstamped periodicals. The attack upon the *National Reformer* had never been intended to be carried out to the bitter end. It was only on account of the offensive attitude taken by Mr Bradlaugh that the Crown prosecution was pressed forward, and the fact of a prosecution having been instituted, enlisted the energies of distinguished publicists who, despite their destestation of the class of subjects advocated by Mr Bradlaugh, were willing to countenance even a journal which advocated prostitution as a family virtue, and free love as a masculine requisite, sooner than permit the Government to have the power of suppressing public opinion, however erroneous, by taxing a journal with heavy sureties which action might, and probably would, operate as a lever in suppressing all organs in the press which were unpopular.

Mr Bradlaugh's action in the matter was of the nature of a purely business enterprise. It gave him the coveted publicity he desired, and introduced him to respectable and influential people who were ready to help him in the event of a real fight with the Crown. When it was discovered that the profits of "martyrdom" were being discounted by Mr Bradlaugh, it was represented to Mr Gladstone that it would be better to repeal the statute that gave Mr Bradlaugh such a fictitious popularity; and accordingly a Bill to effect this purpose was carried through Parliament.

From that date, further contact with an agitator whose opinions were of so questionable a nature, was

avoided by the respectable persons who, in spite of their personal repugnance, had supported him when an important principle was at stake. Mr Bradlaugh found the conflict with the Crown to be a paying game. He was bitterly disappointed when the agitation collapsed. He was grieved by discovering that the coalition who were interested in the repeal of the statute did not feel disposed to put their hands in their pockets to testimonialise Mr Charles Bradlaugh, the defendant. Mr John Stuart Mill wrote him a civil letter, and contemptuously tossed him a donation; that, however, did not satisfy him, for he wailingly said, "The propriety of reimbursing Bradlaugh for his costs never, however, occurred to the Government." From all his undertakings, Mr Bradlaugh expects unlimited glorification to follow, while he looks still more anxiously for the return of hard cash, which can be conveniently and advantageously invested by him in foreign securities.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr Bradlaugh engaged to lecture in the United States—How He was advertised preparatory to His Arrival—From His Three-and-six-penny-a-week Lodging to the most Aristocratic New York Hotel—Interviewed by Press Representatives—"Trimming"—At the "Lotus Club"—Lecturing in Boston, etc.—How the American Public was gulled—Why Mr Bradlaugh shunned the Misses Carlile—Why He suppressed His Anti-Theological Views—Left America to attend Northampton Election—More Money-grabbing Tactics—Alleged to have made over £1,000 Profit from His Lecturing Tour—Lectures realising £30 each—Again in Northampton—Off to America—Lecturing in Christian Chapels—Hob-nobbing with the Clergy—Impossible to compare Mr Bradlaugh with Colonel Ingersoll—Third American Tour—Was not received as on former Occasions—Health broke down—Return Home—Received from his Dupes a Purse of £169 at the "Hall of Science."

IN the autumn of 1873, Mr Bradlaugh made a new departure by lecturing in the United States, from which he gained money and a certain reputation. It was in the United States he first showed his tact as a "trimmer" as to his anti-theological attitude. He played his part of "trimmer" as well across the Atlantic as he has since done at home by the abjuring of his Republicanism, when the sweets of Downing Street seemed to dangle within his reach. As a public lecturer, Mr Bradlaugh was justified in selling his verbal ebullitions for as many dollars as the Yankees were willing

to pay. But as he had gained his reputation as an Infidel lecturer, it was hardly consistent with an honourable man's notions of what is just and straightforward, to carefully conceal all those "Hall of Science" traits which he knew would prove offensive to the intelligence of the inhabitants of the United States. Persons who import and run popular lecturers in New York select men who have made a reputation for "go" and doctrinal eccentricity, without much regard for their consistency of conduct, or the soundness of their orthodoxy. The managers of the "Cooper Institute," trusting to recoup their outlay by the sensation created in advance by the advertising agent, imported wild orators, just as Barnum imported wild beasts. For many years Mr Bradlaugh's notoriety had been growing across the Atlantic. He was understood to be a thorn in the side of the English aristocracy, and in the eyes of the clergy he was looked upon as the modern representative of Satan. It was calculated that such a person as Mr Bradlaugh would, of necessity, take well with the Irish Americans, who hate England, and with the advanced Churches, which have whittled down the Gospels to a respectable universalism, where they have not degenerated into neo-unitarianism. A bargain was made with Mr Bradlaugh to "boom" him through the States, and recoup his managers with the ten per cent. commission which is levied by a theatrical agent on the engagement of a popular clown. The necessary "boom" was started in the New York papers. One

set of papers wrote him down as a wild Anarchist, while the firm who pulled the strings retorted in another set of papers by alleging that he was a dignified ecclesiastic of Broad Church views. His employers, through their advertising agents, launched out into eulogies on the wonderful ability of their goods as a debater, and credited him with the production of the leading anonymous works of the age; while each sectarian journal was manipulated with the gentle insinuation that Mr Bradlaugh privately subscribed to its own pet dogma. The German element was told that he was the coming President of the British Republic. The Irish were treated to disquisitions regarding his personal appearance, which proved him to be one of the aborigines of Connaught, as was said to be evinced by his gorilla-like lip. The Freemasons were cajoled into the idea that he was the head of the Grand Orient Lodge, which was the democratic rival of those orders patronised by the Prince of Wales. Everything necessary to create excitement was done; and when the distinguished foreigner arrived on American soil, direct from his three-and-sixpenny-a-week lodgings in Turner Street, he went straight to the most expensive and aristocratic hostelry in New York—the Fifth Avenue Hotel—where the ubiquitous reporters were in waiting to interview him. The reporter of the *Sun* seized his victim as soon as he made his appearance, and had just turned on the tap of his interrogatories when he was joined by his brethren of the *Herald* and *Tribune*.

Several columns of personal twaddle appeared in the next edition of the newspapers, one journal announcing "Charles Bradlaugh, the future President of England, at the Fifth Avenue Hotel." Not to be outdone, other newspapers called him the modern Danton. One journal styled him the English Mirabeau, with latent oratory and ugliness to rival the great Frenchman. Those who run the "Cooper Institute" worked up the excitement; and the Fenians—having been led to believe that Mr Bradlaugh was the author of the Manifesto of the Irish Republic, which, in the pre-dynamite era, had something to do with blowing down the wall of Clerkenwell prison—felt it their duty to procure for him "welcome-meetings." In these meetings was congregated a very miscellaneous gathering, which attended his receptions, where a good dinner was a satisfaction, if the intellectual guest was not otherwise successful; and it may safely be said that Mr Bradlaugh, in 1873-74, was as much talked of in New York and Boston as was Buffalo Bill in London in 1887.

Mr Bradlaugh was *fêted* in the Lotus Club, which is the arena where new arrivals who are going through a lecturing tour are trotted out, just as horses are exhibited at an English fair. All men of note who attended his first lecture were chronicled by Mr Bradlaugh, who, in his Headingley biographical advertisement, refers to the celebrities who graced his lecture with their presence. O'Donovan Rossa; Theodore Tilton, editor of the *Golden Age*, whose wife was outraged by Henry Ward Beecher;

Mrs Victoria Woodhull, the exponent of "Free-Love;" Andrew Jackson Davies, the famous Ploughkeepsie Seer, and others, were among Mr Bradlaugh's audience. In New York it was his mission to abuse his own country and the institutions under which he had been contemptuously permitted to disseminate his sedition. At Boston—"the hub of the universe"—he was again *fêted*. Wendell Phillips took the chair for him, and there were present Senator Charles Sumner, and William Lloyd Garrison. These names were utilised by Mr Bradlaugh to no small personal profit. The celebrities did not attend to glorify Mr Bradlaugh, but one whose supposed integrity of purpose in bygone years was credited with having rendered their cause a service. It is well known that when Freethought was led by Mr Holyoake in England, the Anti-Slavery Agitation was kept alive by two parties only—the Quakers and the Infidels. The former had money; the latter had energy and conscience. Readers of the old files of the *Reasoner* may turn over its pages to discover the terms on which the disciples of Mr Holyoake stood with Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. These worthies corresponded with the *Reasoner* clientèle of enthusiasts, and it is to them that the Abolitionists owed the sympathy of English working-men. The Abolitionists looked upon Mr Bradlaugh as the successor of Mr Holyoake, and the representative of the English Freethinkers; and they hastened to the Boston meetings to offer their thanks for the services rendered in bygone days. Mr Bradlaugh took to himself the compliments which were

offered to him as the supposed representative of a party which had done good service in England a generation before his advent. When, at a later stage, they discovered that Mr Bradlaugh had concealed his opinions for the purpose of filling his pockets, and that his great patron was the author of the Bible of the Brothel, they withdrew, and bitterly repented having given him the support of their presence.

Possibly it was the dread of offending the religious sentiment of the clergy, in whose chapels Mr Bradlaugh had, on several occasions, delivered his lectures, that made him shy of the encounter, at Chicago, with the daughters of Richard Carlile, who "had shared their humble meal with me when a boy." At that period, he was not only anxious to avoid being recognised by the Carliles, on account of their possible disclosures as to his early life, but because he was afraid that recognising them would bring into prominence those anti-theological views he wished to keep in the background. Besides, he found that, in the event of his preaching Infidelity, he would be considered below criticism if pitted against Colonel Ingersoll, who stands head and shoulders over him in ability, oratory, and in integrity of character. Colonel Ingersoll has won in the United States an infinitely grander heretical reputation than has Mr Bradlaugh in England. Ingersoll's orations are vastly more telling than Bradlaugh's, while they are free from the petty verbal criticisms, and Cockney vulgarities, which form the staple of Mr Bradlaugh's harangues. It was patent

that the Infidel side of the lecturer's character was kept in the background. Even in Kansas city, Mr Bradlaugh talked like a Broad Churchman, or an advanced Unitarian. While in Kansas, intelligence reached him of the dissolution of Parliament. Immediately he rushed off to England, and found that Mr Charles Watts, whom he soon afterwards discarded, had kept up his canvass. At the close of the election, his name graced the bottom of the poll.

Mr Bradlaugh's return to England was dictated as much by pelf as ambition. His presence was necessary to give an impetus to the collection of funds, which were alleged to be indispensable for election purposes; but, irrespective of this, the market price of Mr Bradlaugh's lectures at home, and in the United States, was considerably increased by being bracketed in the press with eminent politicians as a parliamentary candidate. He had then nursed the borough of Northampton for nearly six years, and he found that if the funds were to amount to a large total, it would be necessary for him to pose as the Republican advocate who must be in the Commons to put his foot relentlessly down, as he boasted, on the pretensions of the Prince of Wales, should there be a demise of the Crown and for such a grandiloquent prospect the coppers of the miners of Durham were sure to come in abundance. He had discovered that his orations in the Western States were, pecuniarily, a great failure, in comparison with the travelling expenses he had to disburse to reach far-distant towns. So long as he could "star" at New York, Boston, Philadelphia,

and Chicago, a crowd of local celebrities, as is their custom, honoured Mr Bradlaugh with their presence; and their names were duly heralded, with much sounding of trumpets, in the *National Reformer*. Mr Bradlaugh was anxious to abandon the tour at the point where it no longer continued to be very profitable. His visit to the United States was, of course, a purely commercial speculation. True to his money-loving instincts, he had no sooner arrived at Northampton than he caused a rumour to be spread that he had become liable to pay a large sum to his *entrepreneurs* for breach of contract in not completing his lecturing engagements. This was but another inducement to his dupes to send the hat round amongst the wealthier Secularists. We are told that the profits of the American tour enabled him to pay off £1,000 of his "old liabilities." Curious persons have remarked that it appears singular on the part of Mr Bradlaugh to permit "liabilities" to exist simply that his disciples may exercise their benevolence in paying them off, seeing that Mr Bradlaugh was at that time withdrawing his savings from England to invest them in foreign securities. He boasts that on his first visit to America his average fee for one lecture was £30, while he received £50 at Boston, and on one occasion cleared £75.

During the year, there was another election in Northampton. The state of the poll showed that Mr Bradlaugh was only 70 votes below the Liberal candidate (Mr Fowler), while the Conservative won by 375 votes. Immediately after the poll, the defeated candidate sailed

from Liverpool to America, where he commenced what was his second lecturing tour. At Boston, where he agreeably deceived the Unitarian and Universalist divines, who have so long dabbled in respectable heterodoxy, he won some reputation. Boston city has a *mélange* of sects, which pride themselves in being broader in opinion than the late Dean Stanley, and in possessing more critical exegesis than was exhibited by Colenso. The city where Theodore Parker preached, and Emerson moralised, was bound, in honour to its own traditions, to offer a welcome to another Freethinker, who kept his theological doubts carefully packed up in his portmanteau while on American soil, lest he should offend the pious deacons who were expected to lend their chapels or honour with their presence the attacks, by England's Atheist, on England's Queen. Mr Bradlaugh knew his book, and threw all his real or simulated enthusiasm into the scale of the victorious Abolitionists. He was advised that the correct card to play was that of champion for Great Britain of Universal Freedom, irrespective of colour, nation, and creed. The game succeeded popularly; and, what was more—it paid. The campaign opened by a full-blooded nigger, the Hon. (?) J. B. Smith, presenting Mr Bradlaugh with a set of Senator Charles Sumner's works. Mr Smith had been elected a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, by people who would, except on political grounds, have declined to sit at the same table, or ride on the same car with him. The clergy expected to find Mr Bradlaugh a wild Infidel orator

after the style of his efforts in the "Hall of Science," London. They were agreeably surprised to discover that he was studiously moderate on theological subjects—in fact, to all appearance, he was on the same doctrinal plane as themselves, so they fraternised with him, on purpose to further Boycott an excellent newspaper, which, for half a century, had, in season and out of season, advocated Freethought—the *Boston Investigator*, with Horace Seaver as its editor. They ignored their local prophet; and, to emphasise their spite, they praised Mr Bradlaugh's doctrinal moderation. They had another object in view. The clergy of the United States have, as I have said, to face a platform orator who has a greater reputation there than Mr Bradlaugh has in England. Colonel Ingersoll is the terror of the pulpit. His propagandist power is immense; and the Boston divines were anxious, by elevating the English Freethinker, to depress the gallant Colonel. But they did not succeed, as the mental calibre of the two men is as distinct as is their personal appearance and influence. Colonel Ingersoll is a man of unblemished character in private life. Scandal has never polluted his reputation. His daughters are intensely devoted to their parents, and the Colonel is not only a successful platform advocate and a popular author, but he occupies a high position at the bar, and is by instinct a gentleman. To compare the two men would be to inflict an injury on the reputation of Mr Bradlaugh which would be unfair, as his antecedents remove him from a comparison. His ad-

vocacy of the "Elements of Social Science," as affecting his opinions upon morals, effectually remove him from such a painful ordeal. During his travels in an American winter, Mr Bradlaugh met with some disagreeable incidents. In one case, the boiler of a railway engine exploded; in another, the railway cars got dislocated; while on another occasion he got snowed-up; and, in several towns, he arrived too late to enable his engagements to be satisfactorily fulfilled.

In the autumn of 1875, Mr Bradlaugh made his third American visit, and when he lectured in the most English of the States (New England), he found a very different reception to that he had experienced in Unitarian Boston. The publishers, under their anti-copy-right *régime*, had issued an edition of his infidel writings, which satisfied the public that Mr Bradlaugh was not of the school of Theodore Parker; and he was attacked both on the platform and in the press. But no amount of exposure could make the lecturer resort to the language of his own home dunghill, the "Hall of Science." He reserved his infidelity for English consumption; it would have spoiled his American market for more profitable wares, and would have driven away the liberal clerics, from whom he wished to gain testimonials as to his moderation.

Unfortunately, Mr Bradlaugh's health broke down, and he was compelled to discontinue his lectures. He met with kind friends who tended him through a dangerous illness, and it is pleasant to recall the fact that

while lying in a hospital at New York he received the attentions of benevolent men, who looked after his comforts and cheered him by their presence. On his recovery, he felt that he was unequal to another campaign, unless he should court the fate of Charles Dickens, whose death was undoubtedly accelerated by the rigours of a mid-winter travel while lecturing; and as there was a doubt as to whether the dollars to be gained in the Western States would compensate for the heavy travelling expenses, where there was no popularity to be gained, Mr Bradlaugh returned to England, where he was met by the usual "benefit" at the "Hall of Science;" and the substantial presentation of a purse of £169, which was handed to him by his Knowltonian helpmeet, Annie Besant, would doubtless be transferred by him to his favourite investment—more shares in the Grand Book of the Kingdom of Italy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Mr Bradlaugh's Teachings repudiated by all Cultured Freethinkers—
"Saladin" versus the Knowlton Pamphlet, and the Bradlaugh
and Besant Abominations—Mr Holyoake's Want of Courage—
"Saladin's" Addendum to Dr Agate's Pamphlet—Mr William
Maccall's Writings against and Exposures upon the Teachings of
Brassy Cheek (Mr Bradlaugh) and Breezy Bouncer (Mrs Besant)
—Mr Maccall's Position in regard to Freethought, etc.*

IT would be unjust to the party of Advanced Thought in mental philosophy to conclude that Mr Bradlaugh's feculent views are accepted by any other than the least reflecting of his adherents. Doubtless the particular circumstances which surrounded his earlier career have made him suspicious of female virtue, and by his rough and ready method of moral computation he describes society as divided into two classes: those who are found out and those who escape detection, both classes being pretty much the same in moral aspect. His physiology is taught so as to equalise the penalties which attach to immorality, by explaining how the laws of nature can be juggled by a superior art than that of the abortionist. His experience teaches him that prostitution ends in sterilization, and the condition, which is a blessing to a courtesan, he tries by his system to extend to all other women. It is well

for society that such notions meet with the most determined opposition among some of his own followers; and that men far abler than Mr Bradlaugh have sternly reprobated his Knowltonian creed. In a description of a meeting of Secularists, "Saladin" says:—

"Although, at the date of the publication of the Knowlton pamphlet, I was hardly known in the party at all, I managed to have my name placed on the list of speakers in the first meeting that met to protest that anti-Christian thought was not necessarily associated with an adoption of the practices of Onan. The meeting was held at Cleveland Hall, and was a crowded and excited one. Those who could not accept Christ, but who seemed eager to accept Onan, were largely in the ascendant. Mr Bradlaugh was evidently the hero of the hour, as he always is with the rougher and less-cultured order of Freethinkers, who let him do the thinking, after his fashion, in order to save them the trouble of thinking at all.

"Mr Charles Watts was in the chair, and on the platform were Mrs Harriet Law, Mr George Jacob Holyoake, Mr G. W. Foote and myself. Mr Holyoake was, as usual, excessively prudent. He diagnosed the temper of the meeting, and, instead of venturing to sail against the stream, delivered himself of a few colourless platitudes. His shilly-shallying prudence cast its spell over the other speakers. Mr Watts, as I told him afterwards, made a timid and half-hearted speech, from which I gathered that he wished to still keep the door open for reconciliation with 'our chief.' In fact, in spite of its fleshliness, he had published the Knowlton pamphlet down to the point where publishing it became dangerous, and there he had deserted it. Mrs Law looked ludicrously sagacious, and half stood to her guns, and half ran away from them. Confronted by that meeting (probably packed), Mr Foote alone, of all the prominent speakers, did not allow his heart to sink down to his boots. His platform experience was to him invaluable; he uttered some cutting and caustic things, but adroitly managed to secure as many cheers as hisses. I followed, more in earnest and more bitter than Mr Foote, and sadly lacking in his tact and platform experience. In reply to the hiss of opposition, which I cared not to conciliate, even if I had known how, I raised my voice to a shout of defiance. I managed to make myself heard over the hiss and

groan of Onanic disapprobation, till I thundered forth the words : 'Charles Bradlaugh has dragged the standard of Freethought through the mire of Holywell Street.' Upon this, the storm which had been raging burst into a hurricane. There were clenched fists, and an angry and ominous surging towards the platform. I stood facing the mass, mute and defiant. Mr Holyoake seized my coat-tail, to pull me back to my chair. Still facing the audience, I lifted my arm, and, not over gently, dashed away his hand. The audience noticed this incident, and, for a moment, their cries and hisses of anger were mixed with a peal of laughter. Close to my ear I heard, 'Draw it mild,' from the thin, tin-kettle voice of Mr Holyoake. I still stood facing the audience, erect and motionless ; and when at length the storm of groans and hisses died away, I took one step forward, and repeated, with firm, slow, and syllabic deliberation : 'Charles Bradlaugh has dragged the standard of Freethought through the mire of Holywell Street !' "

Had Mr Holyoake possessed more courage, he might have saved the Party from such a calamity as being identified with Neo-Malthusianism ; but Mr Holyoake was only a journalist of Radical tendencies, whose great delight has always been to polish rhetorical sentences so as to fit them to be mottoes for children's copy-books. It was clear that Mr Holyoake, having divested himself of his leadership, and having submitted to march in the triumphal train of his successor, was not the man to speak straight upon a question where he could "trim," like Mr Facing-Bothways.

In an addendum to a pamphlet by Dr Agate, "Saladin" has written with vitriol and fire for himself and for all decent Freethinkers. He says :—

• "We have heard a good deal about the heroism involved in the publishing of such works as 'The Elements' and the Knowlton pamphlet. There is no heroism in the thing at all ; but there

is a good deal of cowardice, not without a dash of greed and avarice. A section of the public is prurient, and the publication of 'nasty' books like 'The Elements' and 'The Fruits of Philosophy' is profitable. It is a trait of a coward to insult when he deems he can do so with impunity. The publishers and abettors of these feculent works have insulted society, but they dare not defy it. If a certain lady and gentleman be earnest and consistent teachers, they surely ought to *practise what they preach* re promiscuous coition and artifices to escape maternity.* Dare they state in the press that they do so? Dare they mount the platform, and illustrate before the audience animal as they might do vegetable physiology, as regards fructification and reproduction? They dare not do this because of the police. They have the avarice and truculence to insult society, but they have not the earnestness and heroism to defy it. They can put their names to obscene works, out of which they can make notoriety and money, but beyond this they dare not go : decency they have already set aside, but they are deterred by fear.

"While we execrate their indecency, let us be thankful for their fear. Let us congratulate ourselves that, although by their prurience Freethought has been insulted, we owe it to their cowardice that Freethought has not been outraged. Talk of the Pagan Saturnalia and Eleusinian Mysteries ; talk of the early Christian Agapæ : what were these to the Bradlaugh and Besant theory carried out to public demonstration 'in the interests of the poor?' Split in the party ! Better a thousand splits than a moment's acquiescence in such inexpressible subter-beastliness ! Attacking fellow-Freethinkers ! Fate forbend that I should acknowledge them as fellow-Freethinkers of mine ! The cross is the symbol of Christianity ; and, if the syringe is to be the emblem of Freethought, I must mourn without ceasing that, in virtue of my mental and moral organisation, it is impossible for me to be a Christian, and accept the creed whose symbol is the cross, and not the syringe.

"Do I state a far-fetched and false corollary when I allege that the propagandists of Knowltonism should resort to practical demonstration if they were consistent, and had the courage of their

* It must be strictly understood that I deal with the two persons referred to as public teachers, and as public teachers only. As individuals I have nothing whatever to do with them.

convictions? I submit that the corollary is a pertinent, inexpugnable one. Knowltonism involves practical physiology, practical chemistry, and practical mechanics, and I contend that those branches of science cannot be taught effectively without demonstration and experiment. In a little theoretical treatise at sixpence, I deny that they can be taught effectively 'in the interests of the poor.' Why, in the name of courage and consistency, is the demonstration lacking?

"Do I write on an indelicate subject? The fault is not mine. I am a Freethinker, and those describing themselves by the same specific term have committed themselves to abominations against which I, in the name of Freethought, must protest. I must protest, too, that the only organised Society of 'Freethinkers' in England perpetually elects as President one who has done worse than blasphemed fifty gods—has outraged the highest and purest instincts of human nature. Do I write harshly? It is because the language of mortals lacks in bitterness that I do not write more harshly still. The *gentleman* who could sit down with another gentleman's wife to edit in conjunction with her a work on sexual commerce, should be painted in pigments, the due manipulation of which is beyond my skill as a limner. Is it well to place in the front of English Freethought a gentleman who, in conjunction with another gentleman's wife, edited a work which dealt with making sexual intercourse abortive, and which work a jury of his countrymen pronounced obscene? I say it is not well. And since on the subject every other voice in the Freethought ranks is dumb, I lift my voice in the name of the mothers and daughters of England who, in renouncing Christ, did not also renounce chastity; who, in disbelieving that their bodies were temples of the Holy Ghost, did not necessarily believe that they were mere organisms for the gratification of carnal desire. In the name of the English wife and mother I plead and I appeal. Against obscenity in office, and filth in high places in our party, I, a man in the ranks, lift up my testimony, execrating all that would sully the purity of woman and the sanctity of home.

"I am willing to admit that our existing social arrangements are not all that can be desired; that the social machine works with considerable friction. This may be a reason why the machine should be lubricated; but it is no reason why it should be broken to pieces. That wives are not always happy is no reason why all women should

be unmarried harlots. The besetting sin of mob-Freethought of the Richard Carlile school, is the prejudiced assumption that everything that is wrong, simply because it is. 'Down with all that's up!' is practically the motto and watchword of the unthinking outcasts and rebels who, for the last seventy years, have made Freethought stink in the nostrils of everybody whose adhesion would be valuable. *Prima facie*, because a thing is up it should be up, and because a thing is down it should be down. The world was not 'created' yesterday; and, by the doctrine of Evolution, about which mob leaders prate so loudly, and which they understand so imperfectly, it has had considerable time and opportunity to arrange itself according to evolutionary law. Evolution must be permitted to work till we rise to higher and purer social levels. In the home and the family centre the most dearly-cherished love and the holiest sentiment of the English race. This cannot and must not be overthrown by cataclysm. We cannot and must not substitute for the family only isolated children, whom sulphate of zinc have spared, and who may know their mother, but who cannot possibly know their father; while their mother's ignorance on the subject would necessarily be nearly as profound as their own. The bare idea is a crime, because it is revolting to the holiest instincts of our nature. Would man gain as much by the free exercise of sensuality, as he would lose by having no home—for a wife a supply of harlots, and for sons and daughters promiscuously - begotten and promiscuously - supported children, the results of sensuality having failed in its devilish artifices.

"The Freethinkers, so-called, persistently place at their head a man who, as I have said elsewhere, the gentlemen of the British House of Commons will not permit to sit on the same benches with them, even though, by keeping him out, they break the law and outrage the Constitution. On technical pretexts he is prevented from taking his seat; but the true reason for the aversion to him is not heresy and Radicalism—there are plenty of heretics and Radicals in the House already—but men turn away, as from a toad or a serpent, from a person who teaches that marriage is an evil and chastity a crime, that promiscuous coition is most desirable, and that seduction is a virtue. Liberal and Conservative alike, bolt the door in the face of this Caliban, who would, by his teachings, make every woman a prostitute, every home a *maison-de-joie*, and licentiousness and the manufacture of syringes the staple industries

of England. And this person, not permitted to sit with the most abandoned rake and reprobate the House can produce, the English 'Freethinkers' elect as their President, and then they wonder that they do not succeed, that they have to meet in tenth-rate public-houses, and clank their applause with pewter-pots; while not even a solitary thinker of distinction has ever joined them—not one scientist of reputation, not one poet or man of letters, not one individual of the slightest social weight. The Freethinkers proper—the Herbert Spencers, the Huxleys, the Tyndalls, the Frederic Harrisons, the Matthew Arnolds, and the Algernon Swinburnes—would never dream of touching the mess of Secularistic pottage into which the 'fighting President' has dropped his syringe, in order that no respectable person may put a spoon in it. Popular Freethought can never reach the Ai of success, while Achan, the son of Carmi, is in its ranks, treasuring 'the accursed thing'—the shekels of silver and the goodly Babylonish garment* in the shape of profits from the sales of works that contend that man should be a sensualist and the world a *numero*.

"We have, more than once, been assured that 'The Elements' and kindred works are issued with the best intentions. Even if we take this apologetic allegation as genuine, we cannot forget that a certain mythical locality is paved with good intentions; and surely this advocacy of unbridled lust is the largest and most prominent paving-stone in all hell. I am free to admit that the author of the book is evidently a man with more than average ability, and there is a certain Machiavelian insidiousness in his pages which greatly enhances their danger to the morals of the young and inexperienced, and they make up a very large component part of the public.

"True, the Divorce Court and the existence of such social hideousness as was only too distinctly indicated by the Mary Jeffries exposure† may afford a pretext for a desperate measure to counteract a desperate malady; but surely, in the name of common sanity, to abolish the Divorce Court by abolishing marriage, and to suppress houses of evil fame by making all women courtesans, is a measure drastic even to madness. Monogamic marriage *may* set up a standard which is too high to be generally attainable; but all social standards should be high, and public teachers should ever be urging on the public conscience to an attempt to reach the highest moral level. This, with

* See Joshua vii., *passim*.

† See the *Sentinel* for June 1885.

its thousand faults, Christianity, through its ministers, has not failed to do ; and we must not censure it too harshly because it has not always succeeded. As long as Christianity insists on sexual purity and restraint, and debars the transgressor from her sacraments, she does the world a service which goes some way to compensate for many crimes and errors of which she has been guilty. As long as Freethought gives countenance and encouragement to sensuality, she perpetrates against society an error and a crime for which all the good she has done the world can hardly compensate. As long as the Christian teaching as to sexual morals obtains and has Society's endorsement, the most pronounced evil-liver is constrained to be remorseful that he has fallen short of the standard ; and that very feeling of remorse acts as a restraint to still further excesses. But he who adopts the teachings of 'The Elements,' has no high ideal up to which he tries to bring the measure of his conduct ; with him there need be no remorse and no regrets ; there is no standard of purity after which to struggle and to strive ; there is only the inexpressible Malébolgé of unbounded sensuality and shameless lust ; no woman you love that it is not proper for another to love to-morrow ; no maid such as has heretofore blessed the bridegroom's arms, but only a shameless and deflowered harlot who has responded to the desires of others as she responds to yours ; a social convenience, like a drinking fountain or a *châlet* ; a creature liable to be called into use anywhere, or any time, and by anybody, and who constantly carries a syringe in her muff, in the name of Bradlaugh and 'Freethought !'

The most terrible exposure by an intellectual athlete which has perhaps been ever hurled at the sexual religion of Mr Bradlaugh proceeded from the pen of William Maccall, in a series of articles entitled "The Modern Dunghill Dancers," "Their Deification of Bestiality," and "Their Creed of the Cesspool." In "The True Allegorical and Categorical History of Brassy Cheek (Mr Bradlaugh) and Breezy Bouncer (Mrs Besant)" there is satire as keen as ever Juvenal penned. I regret, however, that from the very nature of the

sexual worship which Mr Bradlaugh seeks to establish, it is impossible to quote freely from those marvellous and scathing satires. Like the pictorial worship of a Hindoo religion, the nature of the subject imposes silence to be kept on what would remind the reader of the savage gibes of Dean Swift. It suffices, however, to know that the doctrines of Knowltonism as taught by Mr Bradlaugh are repudiated in the most indignant tones by those who, like himself, reject the divine origin of Christianity, but who yet bow in submission to that religion which ignores theology, and is the sanction of that universal morality which nations and creeds have recognised in every age.

Amongst the noblest and most disinterested, if most erratic and infirm-tempered, of modern heretical thinkers is William Maccall, the friend of John Stuart Mill and Thomas Carlyle. Although never a Secularist—for the reason that the eagle cannot occupy a cage specially built for the wren—Maccall wrote for some years for Mr Bradlaugh's journal his wonted medium, the *Westminster Review*, affording hardly a wide enough arena for his spread-eagle individualism. He tried his best to be helpful to Secularism, in spite of its bald negations, vulgar arrogance, and sterile this-worldism; but when to Secularism, repellent enough in itself, was super-added the prurient hideousness of, for lucre's sake, dealing in obscenity, Maccall's indignant soul rose in arms. With a wild savagery, even more terrible and unrestrained than that of "Saladin," and absolutely

reckless in its vehemence, he attacked the editors and publishers of the Knowlton pamphlet. With frantic rage he leapt into the very middle of the fight, under the desperate *nom de guerre* of HERR VON SCHLAGSCHURKE, and made it splash on every side with a vigour as full of indignation as it was devoid of discretion. To give some idea of the rage of Maccall's pure and chivalrous soul against the Bradlaugh and Besant profitable abomination, I reproduce some more or less quotable extracts from his History of Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer:—

“I have consecrated my life to a doctrine which may be put into a very compendious shape—namely, that every individual should heroically strive to realise his healthiest and holiest ideal of himself in harmony with his highest and holiest ideal of the universe. This doctrine seeks less to gain proselytes than to diffuse itself as an influence: turning away from a cold spiritualism on the one hand and a coarse materialism on the other, it longs for fellowship with all idealisms. It is never polemical but from necessity, and it enters on its militant duties with supreme repugnance. Whom does it regard as its chief foes? Not the Obstructives and Obscurantists, for they may be profoundly honest, and idolising—fanatically idolising—the past are idealists after a fashion. But the enemies whom idealistic individualism abhors, and whom, now and then, it is irresistibly impelled to assail, are the pretended and pretentious champions of progress, whose vile principles and viler practices are in marvellous concordance.

“Every prophet of the truth should be as noble as his creed; indeed the whole of his career should be the grand argument in favour of his creed. A saintly and valiant and beautiful life defies refutation. From the adherents of systems and institutions the world has outgrown we expect only commonplace virtues, and we are not surprised when we find that even those are frequently lacking. They, however, who proclaim themselves

earth's redeemers, the emancipators from the ancient thraldoms and the ancient lies, must be shunned as deluders and scorned as charlatans, if, under the guise of enfranchisement for themselves and others, they are incomparably baser in creed and in deed than the basest disciples of orthodoxy.

"All philosophies and all theologies are merely the dreams of man's sick brain. But moral purity and moral perfection are not dreams. Age after age they are man's sublimest inspiration, man's divinest possession, when all other things perish. Now just in so far as the ideas and schemes of innovators, taking the name of reformers, help or hinder moral purity and moral perfection, must they be welcomed or rejected.

"Many false teachers and false teachings would not be worth a moment's notice but for the empire among the ignorant which they insidiously and impudently win. When the veil of shame is torn away, all mortality is dead. To tear away and trample on this veil of shame is the principal aim, the first victory, of the audacious impostors who are not satisfied with beguiling unless they can also corrupt.

"Theologians are not wrong in believing that sin and error always go together, that sin breeds error, and error sin. Error, however, here is not identical with intellectual mistake: it has an ethical significance. Prophets and sages are indifferent to purely intellectual misapprehensions on purely intellectual subjects. But indifferent they cannot be to the falsehoods, the fallacies, and the sophistries, which are the parents or the offspring of wickedness and wrong.

"The delusion of delusions in these days is the belief that Liberty is in itself a blessing—is the best of blessings; whence it logically follows that what has been called the emancipation of the flesh must be the crown of all other emancipations. This emancipation of the flesh has taken strange and monstrous forms in other countries; in England it has led to a Deification of Bestiality the most revolting, to a worship of the god Priapos, sickening in its abominations. Moral purity cannot exist, moral perfection is not attainable, without the chastity of woman and the sacredness of marriage. The relations of the sexes are the holiest of all relations, and the home should be viewed as the temple where the divinest virtues are adorned, all the sweetest charities, the noblest chivalries are cherished. The Catholic Church is wise in making

marriage a sacrament; but marriage ought to be a sacrament in a far more celestial sense than that in the priest's words. It is the blending of two souls, where self and sense are sacrificed at the altar of Love and Duty. Marriage is not yet what it should be; but for England it is a tower of strength that England's homes have hitherto been the purest in the world. Into those homes, sanctified by Love and Duty, gladdened and brightened by angelic graces, a swinish pollution is striving hard to enter. With shameless dishonesty it assumes the name of Malthusianism; Stercutian Priapism would be a much fitter designation. Malthusianism, as a fanciful not wholly original theory, has been a thousand times refuted. But the worthy priest Malthus, writing in the interest of Anglicanism and Landlordism, had no desire or design to kindle the foulest warfare against nature. He simply wished to discourage imprudent and reckless marriages, and he would have been horrified and disgusted to find the word Malthusianism employed to indicate the ugliest, filthiest, most cowardly, most degrading kind of licentiousness. The books written by the Stercutian Priapists, especially those by female authors, should be entitled 'Lessons in Lust' for boys and girls leaving school. Why should men and women marry if, with impunity, they can indulge in lust to excess?

"The gross hypocrisy of the Stercutian Priapists is as execrable as their Evangel of Debauchery. Noble beings! They live the most self-denying life; they refuse themselves every comfort; they are too democratic to have any of those aristocratic tastes to which upstarts are too prone; they are not attired in purple and fine linen; they do not fare sumptuously every day; they give their goods to feed the poor; and they would give their body to be burned, if thereby they could lessen the sum of human misery! How tender is their heart! How they overflow with mercy! Marvel ye then that, stealing from their lonely and cheerless cell, where their only thought is for the poor, their only labour is for the poor, they are the advocates of Stercutian Priapism through the opulence of their commiseration? Oh, Pharisees, ye have much to learn from the Stercutian Priapists in the science and art of hypocrisy!

"The poor are unfortunate, the Stercutian Priapists assure us, because they have too many children; and it is obvious to the dullest apprehension that if no children are born, no

children can be starved. There never was a more triumphantly logical conclusion. Who says that the golden age can never return? Has it not returned in pamphlets steaming with filth crammed with minute prescriptions for the use of certain chemicals or mechanical appliances to prevent conception? Duns Scotus gave two hundred reasons for believing in the immaculate conception of the Virgin: the Stercutian Priapists give more than two hundred for believing that the only thing immaculate is the absence of conception altogether.

"The Stercutian Priapists may pose as the friends of the poor, as the benefactors of the human race. Do even their most credulous, most fanatical followers believe that they are influenced by anything but the love of gold and of notoriety, and by the morbid appetite to excite morbid appetites in bad and bestial bosoms? To give them credit for any higher or better motive would be to convert charity into imbecility. We who aspire to be the pioneers of the divinest progress, wish to shake ourselves clear of them—that is all. They are an incomparable and intolerable nuisance. Poisoning that they may the better plunder, they are the camp-followers in the army of the future.

"A man called Brassy Cheek, and a woman called Breezy Bouncer, were dancing, naked, on a heap of dunghills. Their violent contortions were accompanied by the wildest yells I ever heard. In the chaos of monstrous shouts there were only two articulate utterances—the one was *swag*, and the other *swagger*. At first I thought that these creatures, who were revelling in such shocking impudicity, were teachers of dancing that had escaped from a lunatic asylum. Then I supposed that they might be the followers of some new sect, especially as this country has about a hundred thousand sects already, and one more or less does not matter much. As I spoke the language of the land imperfectly, I did not ask any questions; but by listening attentively, I learned the names of the dancers, and the reason why they indulged in such amazing and indecent antics—caricatures of the 'Can-Can.' By their jigs and screechings, Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer—for so, as already said, were the dancers named—pretended to vindicate the right of every citizen to walk unhindered along the streets and highways, and to talk about anything he pleased. As this country boasts, and not without

justice, of its liberty, and as the right of free movement and free speech is less interfered with here than in any other nation, I wondered not a little that Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer should attempt, and in such foul and eccentric fashion, to defend what nobody attacked. Presently a dirty man, called, as I ascertained, Caddy Holdthepoke, dressed like a Merry Andrew, came up to me, and thrusting in my face a bag which had once been clean, but which was now a good deal soiled, from having fallen into the dunghill aforesaid, and on which was inscribed in nearly illegible letters the words *Free Thought*, asked me to give something for the benefit of the noble martyrs, as he pompously designated the Dunghill Dancers. I cursed and swore like a German trooper. That was my only reply to Caddy Holdthepoke's impudent petitions. Seeing that I was lifting my foot in a threatening manner, Caddy Holdthepoke retreated; but I noticed that many silly persons in the crowd threw coins into the bag. Some policemen came up. They shrank, however, from approaching the dirty jiggers. After a while, holding their noses with one hand, they, with the other, seized the wriggling and howling dancers, and dragged them from the filth. I turned away in disgust; but before going home I took a bath, and on getting home I changed my clothes. The garments, however, I had been wearing stank so insufferably that I was obliged to burn them. Afterwards, in the newspapers, I read that Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer had been brought before one of the chief tribunals of the country. To the judge and jury they declared that they had been dancing on dunghills because too many babies were born; that their hearts were wrung by the cries of the babies, and that their nasty dance was a protest against the increase of the population. I, as a German, was too obtuse to see the logic of all this: but the exclamations *swag* and *swagger*, and Caddy Holdthepoke's bag, explained to me much that otherwise would have been unintelligible. Devoutly I hoped that dancing on dunghills might never be introduced into good old Germany. The moral I drew from the whole affair was that no people are so gullible as those who are continually babbling about the tricks of priests, none so credulous as those who make a parade of incredulity."

"I went to bed, and soon fell into a sound, delicious sleep. . . . Before me were a gentleman and a lady, somewhat ostentatiously

dressed. As soon as the lady saw the syringe, she addressed it in a bombastic harangue, fondled its back, and passionately kissed the spout. Then playfully the lady forced the gentleman's head through the huge ring, telling him he was her slave, and coquettishly menacing him with her forefinger.*

"But, great god Pan, murderer of the nymph Syrinx, what did I now discover? A flash of surprise, of shame, and, I must confess, of alarm seized my soul: I was in the presence of the Dunghill Dancers! Of all the transformations I had ever read of or beheld, this was the most wonderful. The gentleman and the lady asked me to sit down, and seemed inclined to be hospitable. Thereupon they both began to declaim furiously against a scoundrel called Schlagschurke,† gnashed their teeth, and declared their determination to grind him to powder, though they confessed that his age and their own exalted position might be arguments for mercy. I essayed to say a word on Schlagschurke's behalf, stating that the man, though a hearty hater of humbug, and though subject to fits of fury and indignation, had the best of tempers, combined with intense earnestness a sort of boyish sportiveness,—was free from rancour, was placable to excess, and never resented wrongs done to himself, otherwise than by supreme disdain. Furthermore, I said that it was not so much the dancing naked on dunghills that Schlagschurke abhorred—though that was bad enough—as the audacious pretence that the unseemly spectacle had for its principal object *the benefit of the poor*.

"My host and hostess, for so I suppose I must call them—though I respectfully declined the delicate viands and the rich wines, of which they themselves were about to partake, as I knew that they had been bought with the wages of iniquity—glared at me as Schlagschurke's apologist—the gentleman like a bear, the lady like a tigress. Doubtless I should have been squeezed to pulp, or torn to tatters, if a suave and penetrating odour, like unto that which Flaminio Anquillara perceived more than three hundred years ago, had not stolen to my nostrils. A sublime Eureka enjoyment thrilled through my brain.

"Following the direction of the fragrance, I saw a casket—very

* This may not be quite clear to the reader. It is, however, unavoidably torn from its context, which cannot be here reproduced *in extenso*.

† Presumably Mr Charles Watts.

antique, very peculiar—lying in the middle of a table. Round the casket were multitudes of syringes, most variably, most fantastically grouped, but prevaillingly in the shape of Pandean pipes. To the table a few bold bounds brought me. I put my hand on the casket with the enthusiasm of devoutness and discovery. At first I thought of seizing the casket, mounting the syringe, and returning without delay to Rome. But curiosity induced me to abandon this purpose.

“My impetuous and apparently crazy conduct amused my host and hostess, and disarmed their wrath. They asked me what had kindled my interest in the casket. I replied that though I had never seen the casket before, I knew what it was, and what it contained. Boundless was their astonishment; speech failed them, though an article in which they are not usually found to be lacking. The hostess said that the host, along with his numerous other accomplishments, could perform consummate feats of burglary; not from a thieving propensity, but to seize what could not by fair means be obtained. He had heard of the Holy Præputium, and he resolved to vanquish all obstacles to possess it, that it might aid him in some of his comprehensive designs as the founder of a new religion, in which he himself was to take the place of Jesus Christ, and the hostess the place of the Virgin Mary. The host had once been a lawyer’s clerk, and had thus picked up a small amount of legal knowledge, and had then been a soldier, and had thus formed an extensive acquaintance with illegal practices.

“Concealing his intentions from everyone except Breezy Bouncer, Brassy Cheek went to Calcata. With an air of exceeding humility he requested the aged priests to show him the holy casket, which he devoutly kissed, for he is always ready to kiss the things in which he does not believe, such as bibles; and, in consonance herewith, he maintains that the chief value of an oath is that it can be so easily broken. He offered the priests a large sum for the holy casket; but, loyal to their sacred guardianship, they refused to part with it. Brassy Cheek smiled a sinister smile, again devoutly kissed the holy casket, earnestly craved, and with the bowed head of a penitent, received the blessing of the good priests, and withdrew.

“But Reynard the Fox’s piety is divided by a very thin partition from Reynard the Fox’s trickery and rapacity. Before mid-

night, Brassy Cheek was, with the holy casket clasped lovingly to his bosom, on his road to England. What Breezy Bouncer said when, the following afternoon, returning from a ride in Hyde Park,* she saw Brassy Cheek holding up gleefully the holy casket at a window of the Porneiological Museum, forming part of the gorgeous mansion of these two disinterested friends of the poor, I leave to the reader's imagination—as novelists in similar circumstances are in the habit of doing.

"Boastfully Brassy Cheek narrated to me the burglary so marvellous. However, as an equivalent for the stolen casket, and in order to improve the morals of the young Italian priests, Brassy Cheek sent to the Pope a thousand copies of the edition, mutilated from cowardice and cunning, of the 'Yankee Purlences and Putridities,'† the immense sale of which enabled Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer—those lovers of the indigent, those champions of the oppressed—to keep horses and grooms, and to live luxuriously; and one hundred thousand copies of a book by Breezy Bouncer, too filthy to be named here, and verily the most loathsome work ever written by a woman. Persuaded that I might be regarded as a friend, from the enthusiastic surrender of myself to the glamour of the holy casket, Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer confided to me their grandiose plans.

"The Creed of the Cesspool was to dethrone Christianity, Mahometanism, Buddhism, and every other religion. What the Lingam had been, what the Phallos had been, the Syringe was to be. No one was to be admitted to the holy brotherhood who was not willing to stand three days and three nights in a cesspool, alternating all the time blasphemies of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, with extravagant praises of Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer as the Redeemers of Humanity. When the neophyte was hauled from the cesspool, he was to make the obscenest gestures, and to be welcomed with the obscenest rites. Then all the members, male and female, were to squirt him for an hour with the nastiest, most unmentionable liquids. Next, Breezy

* Mrs Besant, the conscientious and consistent Socialist, was in the habit of riding in Hyde Park.

† From a foregoing chapter the reader has learned that Mr Bradlaugh and Mrs Besant published a new preface, and made several alterations in the "Fruits of Philosophy."

Bouncer was to put on him a crown of syringes, a necklace of syringes, a girdle of syringes, bracelets of syringes, anklets of syringes, earrings of syringes, a nose-ring of syringes; and Brassy Cheek was to place a syringe as big as a walking-stick, like a sceptre, in his hand. Thereupon the neophyte was, seventy times seven, to bang with his nose-ring the holy casket containing the Holy Præputium, and, grunting like a swine, to anathematise Christianity for gladdening and sweetening the tenderest human relations, and for consecrating marriage.

"After these ecstatic delineations of the coming religion, in which—if there were not saints many, there were to be scents many—Brassy Cheek and Breezy Bouncer become so excited that they burst into music. He sang,—‘*A Fisherman, Brassy Cheek, am I, and gudgeons I catch by the score,*’ and then, ‘*A besant of Brass is more to me than a million besants of Gold;*’ she sang the ‘*Song of the Squirt,*’ in which I need not say the word *dirt* often occurred.

"I thought it was time to be off. Seizing a favourable moment I caught the holy casket, mounted the syringe, and shouted, ‘I am Schlagschurke; you, impudent fellow, are Brassy Cheek; you, shameless one, are Breezy Bouncer. I go to Rome to place the holy casket in the hands of my friend the Pope. I detest what you call Malthusianism; but I heartily wish your fathers and mothers had practised it. If ever I come back to England, I hope to take part in drowning the new god and the new goddess in a cesspool.’

"For some moments the two wretches were so bewildered that I found it easy to escape. Breezy Bouncer threw one of her books at me. It struck the snout of the syringe. Not the noise thereby made, but the intolerable stench of the book woke me; and behold, it was a dream!"

In the House of Commons, Mr Bradlaugh effectually conceals the objects which form part of the attraction of his name to those who look upon him as the representative of the god Priapus, and the public owe William Maccall their heartiest thanks for mercilessly uncovering the moral ulcers which eat up that section of the Infidels which believes in Mr Bradlaugh. Had the foregoing

fierce onslaught been made by a Christian opponent, it might be considered to have been prompted by sectarian hatred, but coming from Maccall—himself a Freethinker of the old stoical school—proud of his encyclopædic learning—renowned as a classical scholar and philosopher, and who made it his mission to introduce the choicest works of Germany to England—it is not possible to have a more complete disavowal of Mr Bradlaugh's right to speak as the representative of any school of Freethinkers except that which caters to the metropolitan brothels through the dancing academy at the "Hall of Science," and the wild blasphemy which is carefully shielded from the hearing of St Stephen's.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

Mr Bradlaugh returned by the Electors of Northampton—Determined to advertise Himself in the House of Commons—Claims to affirm—Requested to withdraw—Committee appointed to consider His Grievances—Decision of Committee—Flagrant Self-Contradictions—His BUSINESS Partner's Wire-pulling—Swallowing His "Principles"—In Northampton—The Acme of Hypocrisy and Inconsistency attained—His forming the Subject of Discussions in the House—A Few Extracts from Speeches made in the House re Mr Bradlaugh—Wishes to have the Oath administered—Locked-up in the Clock Tower—Taking His Seat on making Affirmation—Clarke v. Bradlaugh—Cardinal Manning and Charles Voysey on Bradlaugh—Strange Proceedings in Exeter—Denouncing His Radical Committee as "Cowards," etc.—More Swallowing of Principles—Decision in the Action Clarke v. Bradlaugh—His Seat vacated—Re-elected—In the House—Expelled—Mr Labouchere's Bill—Clarke v. Bradlaugh again—Forcing His Way into the House once more—Ejected—Went direct to address His "Hall of Science" Dupes, etc.

It would be difficult to state when Mr Bradlaugh first became ambitious of parliamentary honours, although it is evident that until the passing of Mr Disraeli's Household Suffrage Bill an extreme democrat had little chance of winning a popular borough, unless he had unlimited funds at his command. The silent revolution which followed the passing of a measure of extended suffrage, made it possible for a demagogue to become a member of Parliament. Mr Bradlaugh chose Northampton as the scene of his operations, and resolved to cultivate the

borough by flattering the prejudices of the shoemakers, who had now become the controlling power in the constituency. Mr Charles Gilpin, himself an advanced Radical, was the occupant of a seat which Mr Bradlaugh wished to wrench from him; but he failed in every effort. He first went to the poll in 1868, and, subsequently, during a period of twelve years, he was a perpetual candidate, and was four times defeated. He at last succeeded in getting returned to sit in the tenth Parliament of Her Majesty, his colleague being Mr Labouchere, who polled 4,158 votes to Mr Bradlaugh's 3,827, beating the Conservative, Mr Phipps (3,152), and Mr Merewether (2,826). It was a success of which any one might have been proud to win, and had Mr Bradlaugh acted with common discretion, he might have taken his seat without any objection being raised to his qualification. The political organs of both the great parties in the State noted his entry into the Commons without prejudice, and were prepared to welcome him as a possibly useful member; but it was not the policy of Mr Bradlaugh to glide into the House in an unostentatious manner. He knew that a difficulty would arise respecting the oath, and he thought that, for advertising purposes, it was necessary to strike a dramatic attitude, in order to raise the market price of his lectures. He accordingly adopted a method of turning his election to profitable account. He entered the House on May 3d, 1880, and handed in a written document to the clerk of the House, which contained a claim to have the right

to make an Affirmation instead of the Oath, in the following words:—

*“To the Right Honourable the Speaker
of the House of Commons.*

“I, the undersigned, Charles Bradlaugh, beg respectfully to be allowed to affirm as a person for the time being by law permitted to make a solemn affirmation or declaration, instead of taking an oath.

“CHARLES BRADLAUGH.”

The clerk then asked the member-elect upon what grounds he claimed to make an affirmation. He answered that he did so by virtue of the Evidence Amendment Acts, 1869 and 1870. The Speaker then informed Mr Bradlaugh that “if he desired to address the House in explanation of his claim, he might be permitted to do so.” Mr Bradlaugh replied that “I have to submit that the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, gives the right to affirm to every person for the time being permitted by law to make affirmation. I am such a person; and under the Evidence Amendment Act, 1869, and the Evidence Amendment Act, 1870, I have repeatedly, for nine years past, affirmed in the highest courts of jurisdiction in this realm. I am ready to make the declaration of affirmation of allegiance.” At this stage Mr Bradlaugh was requested to withdraw, in order to allow the House to consider his claim; and upon the suggestion of Lord F. Cavendish, who argued that if any hon. member who applied to take his seat was met with a refusal, unnecessary delays would take place, moved for the appointment of a Committee, which should lay before the House the material on which the House should form

a decision. Sir Stafford Northcote, for the other side, seconded the motion, which was agreed to. On May the 11th, after a debate of two hours, a Select Committee was appointed by a majority of 97 votes in a House of 255. On the 20th May, the committee made a report, in which they said that, in their opinion, "persons entitled under the Evidence Acts, 1869, and the Evidence Amendment Act, 1870, to make a solemn declaration instead of an oath in courts of law, cannot be admitted to make an affirmation or declaration instead of an oath in the House of Commons, in pursuance of the Acts 29 and 30 Vict., cap. 19 and 31, and 32 Vict., cap. 72." So carefully had Mr Gladstone's Government nominated the Select Committee in favour of Mr Bradlaugh, that this decision was arrived at only by the casting vote of Mr Walpole, the chairman.

Mr Bradlaugh next proceeded by making an Atheistical *pronunciamento* as to his conscientious motives in deciding in favour of his legal right to choose between the alternatives of making an affirmation or taking the oath, as the latter course involved the repeating of words which, to his mind, were meaningless; and he said it would have been an act of hypocrisy on his part to take an oath he did not believe in. He considered that if he took the oath he would have been bound by the *spirit* of the words which the affirmation conveyed, had he been permitted to take it. He did not, however, tell the House that this bombastic application was intended to raise the "funds" from his dupes, who for twelve

years had been drained of their cash in order to see an Atheist champion enter the House, and whose elastic faith would have disappeared had they found the first step taken by their hero to be the swallowing of an oath which would have given the lie to a life of Atheistic agitation and braggadocio. Mr Bradlaugh was placed in a position of considerable difficulty, as his pocket depended upon satisfying his disciples that he was staunch to his creed of no-God, and his ambition to be a *bonâ fide* member of the House depended upon his hoodwinking the Gladstone Liberals into the impression that he entered as a Radical, and not as an Atheist. Unfortunately, his journal gave the lie direct to his political professions. His partner had uttered a shriek of satisfaction, in a special congratulatory meeting, in which she said,—“And here we may rejoice that our President’s first act on entering the Commons’ House has been to claim the right of affirmation for an individual member, as Freethinker.” Speaking on another occasion, and before another audience, the *business* partner said,—“The foremost heretic of the day, when he passes within the walls, goes in as Charles Bradlaugh the Radical, not as Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist.” So well did Mr Bradlaugh know the law upon the subject, that seven years previously he had told an audience that he would take the oath, saying that, “In the event of being elected, we should be obliged to comply with the forms to which John Stuart Mill submitted.” He had, ten years previously boasted that he stood at Northampton as an

avowed Atheist, and, "no word of mine in any way softened any of my duties or principles." All this goes to show that when he got before the bar of the House, and failed to succeed by his Atheistic braggadocio, he suddenly veered round, and was ready to take the oath as a mere Radical.

On the 21st May, Mr Bradlaugh, having for the nonce turned Theist, walked into the House, demanding to have the oath administered to him by the Speaker. It was considered that this move was by pre-arrangement with Mr Gladstone. It was the political and not the theological half of the Premier's conscience which had been converted, by the possibility of a Conservative vote replacing the revolutionary member for Northampton. The Conservatives protested against the hon. member's attempt to take the oath, upon the ground of his avowed Atheism, assaults upon Christianity, and his seditious work against the House of Brunswick.

A debate took place, which, after two adjournments, ended in the appointment of a *second* Committee to report whether it was competent for the House to prevent, by resolution, Mr Bradlaugh's taking his seat. On the 31st May, another debate was concluded as to an increase in the number of members. Pending this date and the meeting of the Select Committee, Mr Bradlaugh met his constituents in the Town Hall, Northampton, at the meeting called by the Mayor, "To take into consideration the attempt made in the House of Commons to prevent one of the members for the

borough from taking his seat." The following is extracted from a newspaper report of Mr Bradlaugh's speech at Northampton, which, up to this time, gives the fairest epitome of the facts:—

"He was glad to see that his enemies knew that he could do something in the House, and that they were afraid of his coming there. Since his election, the most extravagant and untrue things had been said about him. Petitions had been sent round the country asking people to sign them, praying that he should not take his seat. His construction of the statute as to his being able to affirm had been concurred in by the Attorney and Solicitor-General, Mr Watkin Williams, Sir H. Jackson, and Mr Serjeant Simon. Mr Bright had said it was right that he should be able to affirm, and that he ought to be allowed to do so. Having the right to affirm, he ought to do it. Had he not claimed that right and taken the oath, he would have been charged with going hypocritically through a form. He had never in the House refused the oath, or said it would not be binding on his conscience. The Committee first appointed would not allow him to be heard, but he did not complain of that—only of the result. He thought it a matter for him to be fairly content that the Committee was equally divided. After their decision, his duty clearly was to take the oath, and his seat. It was his duty to take the oath, because he would by his honour and conscience be bound by the words, although it was a form. The moment he submitted to it it would be as binding on him as the most solemn affirmation or declaration he might make. He would, in passing, say that wherever the law allowed him to prosecute his traducers he would do it. Returning to the question of his offering to take the oath, he said there was no precedent for the course taken by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. There was no legal right to prevent him taking the oath. Had there been, the matter should have been decided by an election judge, who would decide the question on strictly legal lines. The objections to him were on theological and political grounds. Now, what were the facts bearing on this point? In referring to the Parliamentary Oaths Act of 1825, during its passage through the House, Sir George Grey said, 'Let no man be asked any questions as to his religion, but let him take his seat in the House, if qualified to sit there in

the opinion of those who sent him there. And the constituencies alone are the judges of this.' Then he would refer to the protest of Lord Holland, delivered on the 19th of December 1837, in which his lordship said, 'I cannot, directly or indirectly, sanction the opinion that any particular faith in matters of religion is necessary to a proper discharge of duties purely political and temporal.' Therefore, he said, the House of Commons had no right to deal with him on theological questions. As to his political opinions, he had no wonder at the bitterness of the attack. Why, among the folly talked in the House of Commons, Sir H. Drummond Wolff had been guilty of talking treason, which only his privilege as a member of Parliament protected him from. Sir H. D. Wolff denied the right of Parliament to alter the succession, which was a right declared to be treason to deny, and which, if denied, was equivalent to declaring that the present Royal Family had no right to the throne at all. He maintained that it was an insult to the people of Northampton for the House of Commons to examine what he had done before being returned to its walls. Going to the House, and going to the table, although he preferred a form of words better expressing what he wanted to say, if he took the Book and repeated the words, he should regard himself, heart and conscience, bound, to the letter and spirit, to the whole of those words. Who was it that opposed him? Why, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, whose family, fifty years ago, could not take the oath, but who himself could do so, as he was a recreant to his faith. Mr O'Donnell opposed him because he had worsted him outside in discussions on Romanism. But he cared nothing for these men. He respected the objections of Mr Beresford Hope, Earl Percy, and others, believing them to be conscientious. But the question between him and the constituency of Northampton was a solemn one. If anyone thought he could not do his duty, let him say so. If a majority thought that he would not remain as their member, his resignation should that night be placed in their hands; but if they stood with him—if those who stood by him in 1868, and fought with him in 1874—if those who had helped to return him in 1880, many of whom differed from him in theological, but admired his political opinions—if they gave him their confidence, he pledged himself to go into the House, and nothing should stop him. He asked to keep the right to go into the House and take the tongue and talons of those fanatical members who

had attacked him, and drag them from their jaws. He used no words of menace to the House of Commons. It was a chamber in which any man might well be proud to sit, and he felt proud when the electors gave him the right to go there. He asked for no mercy from that House—he only asked for justice; and he believed he would get it when the passion of the moment had passed, and when the anger and fanaticism of the moment had slightly died away. Men would be ashamed that they had attacked an absent man in the way they had. If the electors of Northampton kept the trust in him they had reposed, then they would double the debt of gratitude he owed them, and he would do his duty, and devote himself to that liberty with which his life had been identified, and he would work with tenfold vigour and giant strength until he let his opponents know what he could do.”

On the 22nd June, Mr Bradlaugh gave evidence in his own favour at great length. He stated that he had never at any time refused to take the oath of allegiance provided by statute to be taken by members. “All I did,” he said, “was, believing I had a right to affirm, to claim to affirm, and I was then absolutely silent as to the oath; that I did not refuse to take it, nor have I then or since expressed any mental reservation, or stated that the appointed oath of allegiance would not be binding upon me; that, on the contrary, I say and have said that the essential part of the oath is in the fullest and most complete degree binding upon my honour and conscience; and that the repeating of words of asseveration does not in the slightest degree weaken the binding effect of the oath of allegiance upon me.”

In reality, the question before the House was, How can an Atheist take an oath on a Bible in which he repudiates, and call to witness a God whom he denies?

The country members of the House felt the subject to be one which required to be dealt with in a straightforward manner; and, while they could respect an avowed Atheist who was true to his own convictions, they saw in the junior member for Northampton a man who would wade through the most indecent hypocrisy in order to attain his ends. Could they have any doubt as to his inability to swear on a Bible when the following specimens, culled at random from his journal, the *National Reformer*, present themselves:—

“I am obliged to destroy Theism to make room for Secularism.” (*National Reformer*, 20th March 1870, p. 180.)

“I say you cannot get your lesson of morality without Atheism.” (*National Reformer*, 20th March 1870, p. 183.)

“You can only get the work [of freedom and progress] done, when we have knocked the Bible leaves off the eyes of the people.” (March 29, 1870, p. 184.)

“Every branch of this superstitious tree bears poisonous fruit; you must cut away the roots.” “The Upas Tree of religion overspreads the whole earth; we must cut at its roots.”

“Our real Freethought work is war against religion, to free people from blind submission to Providence and prayer.” (June 12, 1881, p. 475.)

“I have yet to do with the death-scene [the Saviour on the Cross] which our friend has failed to deal with; and if you hiss, wait till I deal with that. I have to deal with the agony in the garden, and if you want to hiss, pen up your feelings, I tell you, until I have dealt with that—the most repulsive feature that ever eye glanced over in the whole record of your sacred Book.* What is the process of this agony in the garden? Jesus came to suffer death, but when it came near—when the grim skeleton Death cast his shadow over the last moments of his life—then, like a coward craven, afraid of the pain and penalty he himself had invoked, he prayed for strength.

* How consistent Mr Bradlaugh was when he kissed the Bible!

“And when at the Cross, how does he die? Bravely, heroically, confident in the sacrifice he has made, and in its success? No! none of this. But on the Cross, when about to die, cries out,—‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’ It is rather the language of an enthusiast who had been himself deluded, or of a knave, who had deluded others, and who, when the bitterness of death had come, could keep up the sham no longer.” (pp. 152-3, “Modern Atheism and the Bible,” a discussion between the Rev. William Barker, of Hastings, and “Iconoclast,” *alias* Bradlaugh, held at Cowper Street.)

“The dying Jesus, in that cry, confessed himself either the dupe of some other teaching, a self-deluded enthusiast, or an arch-impostor.

“Why do you attack Judas? Because he betrayed Jesus? Why, if there had been no Judas, there might have been no atonement. This same Judas saved the world! If he had not betrayed Jesus, Jesus was already afraid to die, and he might have slunk out the whole scheme altogether.

“Your Atonement is a sham; your Atonement is a deception; your Atonement is but a foul leprosy upon human intellect; a plague-spot of priestcraft, and I impeach it.”

The Select Committee examined Sir Erskine May at length, who gave evidence as to the procedure in parliamentary elections, after which Mr Bradlaugh himself was examined. In the report presented to the House, the following words occur:—“And your committee are of opinion that by and in making the claim to affirm, Mr Bradlaugh voluntarily brought to the notice of the House that on several occasions he had been permitted in a court of justice to affirm, under the Evidence Amendment Acts, 1869-70, in order to enable him to do which a judge of the court must have been satisfied that an oath was not binding upon his conscience.” This in itself was a justification of the action of the House. When the debate upon the report

took place, the most diverse opinions were given as to the desirability or otherwise of permitting Mr Bradlaugh to take the oath which he had so ostentatiously evaded. The division which ensued was not a "party" one. Mr Gladstone was unable to induce his followers to go into the lobby in his support. It was not on account of his Atheism that Mr Bradlaugh was ignored, for it is well known that many Atheists had been members in prior Parliaments; and there were distinguished men in the tenth Parliament of her Majesty who were avowed Agnostics. The Agnostics, however, accepted the conventional passage to St Stephen's, and while they collectively would have welcomed the accession of persons of sceptical opinions, they individually resented the intrusion of a demagogue whose primary instinct was to play to the mob. Neither Christian nor Jew cared for the theological opinions of Mr Bradlaugh, but they felt that the House would be degraded by the entrance of a man who would be spurned at in "society." On the 21st June, the House was occupied solely with a debate on the report, and on the following day, a motion made by Mr Labouchere, that Mr Bradlaugh be allowed to make a declaration or affirmation, was rejected by 275 against 230 votes. As this was the first debate on the hon. member's qualification, it will be well to quote some of the expressions made use of by gentlemen on that memorable occasion, as indicative of the unsavoury reputation which Mr Bradlaugh's past career had won for him:—

"Dr LYONS said a large body of Catholics and Protestants in Dublin were scandalised with the proceedings which were occupying the attention of the House, in the person of the hon. member for Northampton—not only scandalised with the views which that gentleman had had the audacity to express on religious subjects, but with the writings he had published on great moral questions, and the outrageous assertions he had made with reference to the reigning house in this country. It was idle to compare this with other cases, where hon. members like Baron Rothschild had refused to take the oath on conscientious grounds. The House was scandalised to see such a change take place in a man's opinions in the course of a week. Who was this person now at their doors seeking admission to the House? He could not be said to be a martyr to science. To admit him would be to make the House an advertising agency for his disgusting pamphlets. If this individual were sent back to Northampton, and Northampton chose to re-elect him, upon the shoulders of that constituency would rest this grave public scandal."

"Mr WARTON said he mistrusted a reference to a Select Committee, especially so when he considered the terms of the reference now proposed. They were not to be led away by the bugbear that this was a judicial question; Mr Bradlaugh having claimed to affirm, could not now be admitted to take the oath. Then they were asked to bear in mind the importance of the constituency. But when Northampton returned Mr Bradlaugh, it knew that he was the Cerberus of Atheism, treason, and filth. If it chose to elect such a person, it could not complain if the House chose to expel him."

"Sir H. W. TYTLER severely condemned the writings of Mr Bradlaugh, which gave rise, he said, to shudders of abhorrence. Mr Bradlaugh was the champion of Atheism, of irreligion, and of immorality, and he was engaged in disseminating throughout the country pernicious pamphlets by thousands, as a source of livelihood—as a means of getting money. He was a man who had poisoned and was poisoning the minds and souls of his fellow-creatures; and was such an individual as this a fit and proper person to be admitted to take his seat in the British House of Commons?"

"Mr HUBBARD said he knew nothing about Mr Bradlaugh, but he quite approved of the Speaker, when it was proposed to read from a work of that gentleman's, taking the course of checking the reading of unnecessary moral garbage. The house was not re-

sponsible for this question having been raised. It was Mr Bradlaugh who had raised it, and he (Mr Hubbard) believed it was done out of simple vanity, and for the purpose of advertising himself and his detestable doctrines. If Mr Bradlaugh had presented himself to take the oath in the first instance, there would not have been any objection ; but Mr Bradlaugh had chosen to ask to be permitted to make an affirmation. There was no precedent for a case of this kind. The question demanded the most careful, deliberate, and charitable construction. They had to consider not merely justice, but truth, which had been always indissolubly linked to justice ; and the course which the hon. gentleman who was concerned had taken was the very contrary of truth, for he was now prepared to assent to what he had previously called idle and unmeaning words. The House revolted from that, and felt it would be a disgrace to the House and a disgrace to the country."

"Sir W. BARTELOT said that this was a far more difficult and dangerous question than the hon. member seemed to suppose. If the member for Northampton had presented himself at the table and taken the oath in the ordinary way, no one would have disputed his right to do so, or have cared to go beyond the fact that he had complied with the law. But the hon. gentleman came forward and told them that an oath was not binding on his conscience, and that he looked upon its sanctions as idle words. He was surprised to hear the Prime Minister get up in his place and say that he would allow this man, who did not believe in the oath, to take it, to spare them the pain and trouble of deciding it. He deeply deplored that statement."

"Sir H. GIFFARD.—What was the Committee to inquire into? It was trifling with the House to suggest that there was any single member who entertained the slightest doubt as to what the facts of the case really were. The person most interested in the question had himself repudiated any doubt in the matter. He affected no disguise, but at the table, and by communications in the newspapers, he had asserted, in the plainest possible terms, that he was prepared to go through the form of taking the oath, but only as an idle form. Was the House to permit the Book to be kissed without avowal, and to sanction what must be admitted to be at least a gross irreverence? Something had been said about 'religious fanaticism ;' but it was irreligious fanaticism to degrade sacred words. If it was true that this gentleman was prepared to come forward and take the

oath in accordance with the statutory recognition, there was an end to it; but that was what he was not prepared to do. He was prepared to go through an idle form, and recite the oath as one might recite it backwards, but he was not prepared to appeal to the Divine Being or recognise the oath as binding on his conscience."

On 23rd June, Mr Bradlaugh made another demand at the table of the House of Commons to have the oath administered to him. The Speaker requested his withdrawal, after informing him of the resolution arrived at by the House on the preceding day. Mr Bradlaugh, who then asked leave to address the House, was permitted to speak from the Bar. After this episode, his *Christian* colleague moved the rescindment of the resolution passed on the previous day. Mr Bradlaugh, having been recalled, was requested to withdraw from the House. With studious insult, he objected by saying, "I respectfully refuse to obey the order of the House, because the order is against the law." This specimen of Infidel courtesy aggravated the Commons, and the hon. member was removed in custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and locked up in the Clock Tower. The next day, on the motion of the leader of the Opposition, he was discharged from custody. On the 28th June, Mr Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move a resolution that members-elect should be allowed to make affirmation instead of an oath. On the 1st July, the motion was carried by 303 against 249 votes; and, on the following day, Mr Bradlaugh made affirmation and took his seat according to the resolution, which was couched in the following words:—"That every person

returned as a member of this House, who may claim to be a person for the time being permitted to make a solemn affirmation or declaration instead of taking an oath, shall henceforth (notwithstanding so much of the resolution adopted by this House on the 22nd day of June last as relates to affirmation) be permitted, without question, to make and subscribe a solemn affirmation, in the form prescribed by 'The Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866,' as altered by 'The Promissory Oaths Act, 1868,' subject to any liability by statute." The sting of this resolution was contained in the last sentence. On the 2nd July 1880, Mr Bradlaugh subscribed the affirmation, took his seat, and voted in a division. Almost immediately the hon. member was served with a writ, at the suit of a Mr Clarke, to recover a penalty of £500 for having sat and voted without taking the oath. Mr Clarke was merely an agent of the late ultra-Protestant, Mr Newdegate, M.P., who made the mistake of percolating through an agent that which he should have himself performed at a later period, for it was evident that the writ was issued before Mr Bradlaugh actively voted. Questions were asked in the House as to whether or not, seeing the Government was about to bring in a Bill to legalise affirmations, the penalties which Mr Bradlaugh had incurred would be remitted. Mr Gladstone refused to decide such a question until it was seen what would be the issue of such an action. About the same time, Sir Eardley Wilmot, Mr Alderman Fowler, and Mr

Hicks introduced a Bill directed against Mr Bradlaugh and others, "to incapacitate from sitting in Parliament any person who had, by deliberate public speaking, or by published writing, systematically avowed his disbelief in the existence of a Supreme Being;" and, by the unaccountable oversight of the promoters omitting to comply with the forms, the House was unable to secure a second reading for their Bill. At this period, public attention was directed towards the question by excited meetings of persons who were of opinion that free thought and free speech were in danger. Men became earnest in the matter who cared very little for religion in any shape or form, but who were anxious when they feared that the Tory party might go a step further in curtailing public liberty. Cardinal Manning published "An Englishman's Protest" from one pole of religious thought, while, at the opposite pole, the Rev. Charles Voysey, who occupies something like the same position in the pulpit as Professor Francis Newman does out of it, wrote a letter to say that he felt disgraced by the people of Northampton electing Mr Bradlaugh, and that "most of the speeches in the Bradlaugh case, in favour of his exclusion, struck him as singularly good, wholesome, and creditable." No doubt, Mr Voysey felt acutely on the subject, for at one time Mrs Besant, much to his disgust, honoured his church with her presence.

During the autumn Mr Bradlaugh made a triumphant tour through the provinces. At Exeter, an amus-

ing scene occurred. It appears that his "Committee" of Radicals had got an impression that the hon. member would probably be "lynched" by those who could not pay eighteenpence per head—the then price of admission—so they accordingly applied to the Deputy-Mayor for police protection. The gentleman applied to, taking the "Committee" at their word, gave notice to Mr Bradlaugh to abstain from delivering his proposed lecture. The lecturer, who had expected a goodly number of eighteenpences, was very indignant, and it was with considerable misgiving that the disappointed and perplexed Ulysses retired to his tent. He refused even to go to the hall, where the audience was clamouring for their money, which they had paid for entrance. From a report in an Exeter newspaper, the following is extracted:—

"The Radical Committee repeatedly explained that their motive in soliciting police aid was to protect their lecturer, who only laughed at them for their pains, persisted in refusing to go down to the hall, told them that he weighed 'sixteen stone, and was never afraid of anybody in his life.' 'But we had every reason to believe there would be a disturbance,' reiterated one of the leading spokesmen. 'I don't believe it,' said Mr Bradlaugh. 'You don't believe anything,' meekly put in a voice. 'What's that, sir?' demanded 'Iconoclast.' 'You don't believe in anything,' repeated Mr Alfred Milford, more loudly. 'I must request you to withdraw, sir,' said the Invited of the Exeter Working Men's Radical Association, rising from his chair, and looking significantly towards the speaker—who made no move. 'For the present, this is my room, and I won't submit to be insulted,' continued Mr Bradlaugh, who, striding past his political friends, with an attitude of fierce disdain, approached Mr Milford closely as the latter hastily departed. Apologies for Mr Milford's remark were made by some of the deputation who remained, but Mr

Bradlaugh, who was evidently tired of the parley, told them defiantly that 'he never said one thing and did another ; he had declined to go to the hall ; there was an end of it ; if he ever gave in, he preferred to do so at the beginning rather than afterwards ; his Committee were a set of cowards ; they had never told him that evening, though he had seen all of them twice, and some of them thrice, that they had sworn any information whatever ; people might cry out for their money ; he had nothing to do with that ; he was sorry for them ; he could not help it ; his time was precious ; he wished he were in London ; he had sent for "that man Stradling," but he failed to come ; as it was, he (Mr Bradlaugh) would leave the city by the next train for London.' Thereupon the deputation departed, chopfallen and abashed. And the great agitator rose, brushed his hair back from his expansive forehead, and remarked to our representative that 'he must take care of his innards, whatever happened,' and then, addressing the obliging and for once obviously amazed waiter at the Queen's, said, 'Waiter, let me have my roast beef and claret, and anyone else who wants me must send in their names.' Subsequently Mr Stradling, who had been doing his best at the Victoria Hall to appease the angry multitude locked within, made his appearance. 'Iconoclast,' regarding him contemptuously, said, 'I have to tell you I am ashamed of you.' 'I am very sorry,' was Mr Stradling's reply ; 'I have not done anything with the intention of injuring you or your cause.' 'I look upon you as my greatest enemy,' said Mr Bradlaugh, who, annoyed at the prospect of his room being once more filled with his political friends, cast a longing eye towards the roast-beef and his bottle of St Julien, which by this time had been brought in, and adjourned to another apartment, without as much as saying 'good-night.' This proceeding the visitors evidently regarded as a breach of good manners. However, they hoped on, lingering about the door for some time, but in vain, and Mr Stradling at last resolved on making his exit, remarking, 'and quite time, too.'

Scenes somewhat similar to the foregoing took place in various parts of the country. The price of admission to his lectures since his entrance to the House had been, with Mr Bradlaugh's keen monetary instinct, considerably raised. Several speeches were delivered

during the following session, and public attention was riveted on an abuse which, for a considerable time, the hon. member had made very prominent in his outdoor orations, when he had pledged himself to bring forward a motion on "Perpetual Pensions." About that time Mr Gladstone, in his Midlothian speeches, had spoken boldly on the question, and there was a panic amongst the holders of pensions, as kingly grants, or for distinguished military service, which had been fixed on the Treasury generations ago. Public opinion was ripe on the subject, but Mr Gladstone had gained his object, and many of the holders of those annuities were adherents of the Ministry. It was inconvenient to bring the matter at that time to a division, and as Mr Bradlaugh had everything to hope for from Mr Gladstone, he was ready to obey his behests. On the 15th March 1881, when the motion came on, the hon. member showed his gratitude for expected favours by withdrawing his motion on "Perpetual Pensions," ostensibly to facilitate Supply. The real reason, however, was not difficult to find, for on the 11th March 1881, judgment was given in the action *Clarke v. Bradlaugh*, brought to recover penalties for sitting and voting in the House without taking the oath. The Law Courts had decided that which the House was unable to decide. On the 31st March, the decision of the judge in this case was practically a declaration that the affirmation made on the

Resolution of the House was bad in law, and Mr Bradlaugh's seat was vacated.

On the 9th April 1881, Mr Bradlaugh was again re-elected for Northampton. Upon his going to the clerk's table, Sir Stafford Northcote, the leader of the opposition, objected to the oath being administered. The hon. member for Northampton made another speech at the Bar. Subsequently he again advanced to the table, and was again removed by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Pending this performance, the House adjourned. On the re-assembling of the House on 29th April, Mr Gladstone stated his intention of introducing a Bill for the Amendment of Parliamentary Oaths. This Bill was discussed, but never passed. On the 10th May, the frequent interruptions of Mr Bradlaugh attained their climax when he again presented himself at the table and demanded that the oath should be administered. As he refused to withdraw, a resolution was passed, on the motion of Sir Stafford Northcote, "that the Sergeant-at-Arms remove Mr Bradlaugh from the House until he shall engage not further to disturb the proceedings." In the meantime, Mr Labouchere, with the assistance of the Government, had tried to bring forward his Bill to grant an indemnity to Mr Bradlaugh against the penalties he incurred by sitting and voting without his having taken the oath. The object of the senior member for Northampton was calculated to prevent the junior member from an

adjudication in bankruptcy on account of Clarke's judgment, which would disqualify Mr Bradlaugh from sitting and voting in Parliament. On the 19th and 20th June, the action *Clarke v. Bradlaugh* came on for trial in another form, before Mr Justice Grove, when the plaintiff recovered penalty and costs in the action. The verdict was appealed against on "Writ of Error," upon the ground that the writ was issued before the defendant sat and voted. This was decided in favour of the plaintiff, and subsequently a special issue was directed to be tried in the Queen's Bench division, which was again decided in favour of the plaintiff, and upon which appeals were afterwards granted.

On the 3rd August, in defiance of the orders of the Government, Mr Bradlaugh again forced his way into the House, and was ejected by order of Inspector Denning. Mr Bradlaugh alleged that unnecessary force had been used to expel him, and that he had thereby sustained injuries which had resulted in erysipelas. The same evening, he boasted at the "Hall of Science" that he had told Inspector Denning that he could return with sufficient force to gain him admittance, but that he had no right to risk the liberties and lives of his supporters. In the course of his ejection from the House, he got his coat-tails torn in the scuffle, and was thrust out of the lobby in an exceedingly limp and exhausted condition. His resistance to the police-con-

stable delegated to remove him, which would have been a disgrace to a rough from Seven Dials, was a carefully-studied piece of tactics, and highly recommended itself to the taste of the class of "society" with whom, and with whom alone, Mr Bradlaugh is a hero. That wrestle with the police was intended to extract more money from his credulous dupes to invest in the favourite Italian Securities. Arrayed in his torn coat, the padding and lining hanging out in ostentatious rags, he hurried off to the "Hall of Science," and assuming the plaintive attitude peculiar to himself, gesticulating with one arm only, alleging that the other was disabled, he poured forth the story of his heroism and his wrongs, ever and anon appealing to the testimony of his torn coat, and thereby working up his dupes into thunderous ecstasies. The wily advertising agent had got an advertisement now! Two days after this occurrence he applied for criminal process for assault against Inspector Denning. His request was met with a contemptuous refusal. Still determined to keep his name before the public, he summoned Mr Newdegate, M.P., and his solicitor, on a criminal charge of Maintenance, viz., for inciting another person to bring an action against him. This was also refused, although subsequently a verdict was obtained on the charge in a civil court. Such was the career of Mr Bradlaugh during the first two sessions of the tenth Parliament of Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XXX.

Inauguration of the Whitminster School—A Thorn in the Flesh to Mr Bradlaugh—His Underhand Conduct commented upon by “Saladin”—“Lara’s” Scathing Article on Mr Bradlaugh, wherein He designates Bradlaughism “an Unspeakable Abomination”—Conclusion.

IN the latter end of 1883, Glegg Bullock, Esq., a wealthy gentleman of Freethought principles, desiring to benefit persons of his own Agnostic views, through the medium of a superior school, entered into correspondence with W. Stewart Ross (“Saladin”) the editor of the *Secular Review*, and ultimately completed the institution, which he intended to endow in so handsome a manner that it might be to the sons of Agnostics what Winchester and Rugby are to the sons of Christians. Mr Glegg Bullock was then an aged gentleman, and, unfortunately for his own happiness, he had no near relation to inherit his wealth. He had, as an act of charity, educated and clothed a poor lad, and afterwards paid the expense attendant upon his entering the medical profession, besides establishing him in a lucrative practice in the West End, and bestowing upon him from time to time large sums of money. This recipient of Mr Bullock’s charity by no means approved of his patron’s turning his attention to an Agnostic

school. He took the necessary steps—regardless of the cruelty—to prevent its success, which efforts culminated in placing his benefactor in a lunatic asylum, thereby closing the school through lack of funds. However, for a time the Whitminster school was a potent fact. While it existed, it was properly equipped. W. Stewart Ross (“Saladin”), who was the guiding spirit, and who periodically visited the school, is a man who has achieved success in many capacities. He wields a pen which, for brilliant satire and incisive denunciation, has not been surpassed since Junius ripped up the reputation of the Duke of Bedford, and reproduced in England the philippic of Demosthenes and the satire of Juvenal. W. Stewart Ross is a scholar and a poet of eminence. Amongst the anonymous journalists of to-day there is no more polished writer than “Saladin,” nor one who breathes a more chivalrous spirit in the conflicts of modern controversy. Associated with Mr W. Stewart Ross was a remarkably able man, whose future position in the republic of letters will rank high, if he does not achieve still greater distinction as an orator. Mr George Chetwynd Jones (“Lara”) was Principal of the Whitminster school, and in this capacity he, along with “Saladin,” incurred the enmity of the editors of the *National Reformer*. The ground of offence was the institution of a Freethought school without a licence for the carrying on of such school being granted by Charles Bradlaugh! The usual tactics were adopted to suggest to the orthodox Atheists of the Bradlaugh clique

that there was something wrong, by innuendoes in the "Notes to Correspondents." This, of course, was only to lay the foundation of a covert attack, which at last assumed the form of a proposal to "visit the school and report upon it." Mr Bradlaugh was merely endeavouring to carry out the assumptive power exercised by the members of the Episcopal Bench who act as "Visitors" to the colleges in their dioceses. When this offer was rejected with scorn, the real antagonism was manifest in a hostile reply to both the gentlemen responsible for the working of the school, and which fully explains the feeling evinced by the section of Freethinkers who dissent from Mr Bradlaugh's moral (?) teaching, that I quote extracts from the published answers of "Saladin" and "Lara," which are useful as embodying the views of educated Agnostics on the social principles advocated by Mr Bradlaugh. "Saladin" says: *—

"Did you abolish God that you might exalt Ananias? No, sir; unlike you, I have never lived upon the party; I have never fattened upon the pence wrung from the hands of poor working men, and applied the hard earnings of coal-pit and workshop to the humouring of my litigious and political vanity. It is only when you rise to the importance of irritating Mr Foote or myself that you can have the plain truth told you as you have it now,—that you can have the mask torn from your face, and your face slapped as it should be.

"You cannot brook either your superiors or your peers; and, mistaking meretricious notoriety for honest fame, like the frog in the fable, you blow yourself out among the illiterate waifs who are your ministers, till 'this globe and all that it inherits' is too

* "Ananias, The Atheists' God." London: D. J. Gunn & Co., 84 Fleet Street.

small for you. But ask yourself the question, 'Who are you in the eyes of your equals and your superiors? True, there is some magnetic power in your rough and loud delivery, and you wield the pen of a fifth-rate journalist. But you have never evolved an original thought or given point or charm to an old one. You have never written a line that will live, and your place, in a vile byepath of history, will be somewhere between John Wilkes and Richard Carlile.

"You express your readiness to visit the Whitminster Secular School, and 'report.' If, recognising at last your bad grammar and worse manners, you desire to enter the school as a pupil, I will see what can be done for you. But if you would visit the school to make a 'report,' I thank you, but can dispense with you. Which of the studies would you 'report' upon? I have yet to learn that you are qualified to 'report' upon any of the branches of a liberal education, with, of course, the exceptions of prurient Knowltonism and blatant Atheism, and these branches are not studied at Whitminster. How admirably fitted you are to visit a school, and 'report'!

"I did not relinquish Christian impostures to take up with Secular ones; and this journal,* that you so constantly sneer at, has, at least, the advantage of being thoroughly and absolutely independent, and armed so strong in honesty that, in the defence of truth and principle, it can afford to pillory a Christian Dionysius or a Secular Cleon, and it cares not a pin which of them it has to deal with.

"You, sir, are a blot and an infamy upon Freethought and politics and everything you touch. Where would English Freethought have been to-day but for your crude Materialism and its corollary of revolting Atheism? and where would English Radicalism have been to-day but for its having been doomed to carry you on its back like an Old Man of the Sea—you, overweighed with philosophical crudities, and sociological abominations? The Freethinkers proper stand aloof from you, and the Radicals proper, lament that you are one of them.

"It is not every self-respecting man who would trouble to write to a person who had made profit out of selling an obscene pamphlet, and who had made himself so obnoxious to educated

* The *Secular Review* is here referred to.

and cultivated humanity that the gentlemen of the British House of Commons will outrage the Constitution rather than permit him to sit on the same benches with them.

"Sir, I wash my hands after having performed an unsavoury task, and I trust that, for your own sake, if not for mine, you will not again venture to cross my path, leaving behind you the slime of your slander. The kicking of a certain malodorous animal is easily enough performed; but it entails one's investing in a new pair of boots, and the game is not worth the candle. Go on, sir, and rant to your Cat-and-Ladleites, and extract their pence, and leave scholars and gentlemen to pursue their own path, and you may depend upon it it will be a long time before they will so far forget themselves as to notice you."

Mr Chetwynd Jones ("Lara") in an article entitled "Mr Charles Bradlaugh and the Secular School," commenting on the controversy then in progress between the editors of the *Secular Review* and the *National Reformer*, says:—

"Those of the readers of the *Secular Review* who, like myself, are wont to amuse their leisure for an hour or so per week in studying the efforts of a certain journal to be at once Atheistic, Knowltonic, political, and pseudo-respectable, under the conduct of a bi-sexual combination of corresponding editorial qualifications, must have derived not a little diversion from the observation of the attitude respectively assumed by each journal to the other. For my own part, however, I must confess that the amusement which I have derived from this source has not been altogether unmixed with regret. Freethought in England is engaged in a struggle of such moment and magnitude, and with foes so numerous, savage, and unscrupulous, that no true Freethinker who is honestly devoted to the cause, and who fights the battle of the truth for the truth's own sacred sake, can contemplate a gap in the phalanx without lamenting the cause of the division. Unhappily, however, it is not enough to say that there is a gap in the phalanx of English Freethought. There are, indeed, two phalanxes, ostensibly marching in the same direction and against the same foes, but which, nevertheless, have as little dealings

with each other as had the Jews and the Samaritans of old. Of these two gallant companies, the more numerous and motley has for its gonfalon the *National Reformer*, which is a misnomer for the *Bradlaugh and Besant Gazette*. Its leader is a sort of proletariat Goliath, who resembles the Champion of Gath not only in stature, but also in mode of address and armament, which last, if I remember my Bible right, was chiefly composed of brass. He has an armour-bearer of the opposite sex, whom the politeness due to even the name of woman prevents me from fitly describing.

"The smaller, but intrinsically stronger, phalanx marches under the standard of the *Secular Review* and the fitting leadership of 'Saladin.' In numbers it is, doubtless, inferior to that which chants the wild strains of 'Bradlaugh for Northampton;' but here the disparity ends—*teste* the discretion of the more numerous force.

"Some time ago, when Christian England had just been edified by the spectacle of an aggressively-professed Atheist struggling to take a meaningless oath in the name of a god whose existence he had for many years denied with much shouting, there seemed to be some prospect of a pitched battle between the two phalanxes, and the leaders were as nearly engaged hand-to-hand as one of them dared to adventure. Unfortunately, the encounter ended with the first skirmish and a brilliant display of the better part of valour by the elder leader from behind the ramparts of the fortress of the Cat-and-Ladle. Since then the relations between the two parties have been strained, rather than openly hostile.

"The chief feature, I may here say, of the policy pursued by the discreet section is an affectation of ignorance respecting the existence of the other section. For a long time, however, many of the subscribers to the sundry and manifold Bradlaugh Aggrandisement Funds were kept in partial or complete ignorance of the existence of any other section of the Freethought Party in England than that which existed in the name and for the profit of Charles Bradlaugh.

"Touching these ever-succeeding, but apparently never-successful, Bradlaugh Aggrandisement Funds, I would, *en passant*, fain have a word with the wise. The public is usually informed whence the many sums of divers amounts come; but I cannot myself remember the publication of reliable accounts as to whither they go. It is, for instance, notorious that, pending the Newdegate

affair, a very considerable sum was placed at Mr Bradlaugh's disposal 'to fight the bigots.' Now, the said 'bigots' were beaten and mulcted in costs. I see that in the last issue of the *National Reformer* the editor, or editress, regrets that I should have thought fit to be 'impertinent.' I wonder if I should be deemed 'impertinent' if I ventured to ask what became of that money, and where it was publicly accounted for. 'General expenses' is, I know, a conveniently comprehensive term, and I am aware that a heavier expenditure might be deemed necessary to support the dignity of the junior member for Northampton than to supply the humbler needs of 'Iconoclast'; but I cannot help thinking that money received by a public man, *as a public man*, should be accounted for to the uttermost farthing, with all possible publicity. Again, even at the risk of being once more considered 'impertinent,' I would suggest that, while Secular Societies are languishing for want of funds, and Secular halls are chiefly conspicuous (for the same reason) for paucity of number and meanness of appointment, as little money as possible should be devoted to personal magnification. The Secular hat seems now-a-days to bid fair to rival the clerical begging-box in its circulatory efforts to enable a god-invoking Atheist to circumvent the good taste of the House of Commons.

"While on the subject of 'impertinence' might I further suggest that, the next time the junior and rev. member for Northampton tries to take the name of the Lord his God in vain, he should do so on a Testament interleaved with 'The Fruits of Philosophy.'

"I have been led to pen these few remarks by a conviction that it is about time to expose, before the more thinking and cultured portion of the Secular Party, the unworthy tactics of the *soi-disant* leader of English Secularism. Those tactics show conclusively that Charles Bradlaugh is determined to use such influence as he possesses to consign to the limbo of oblivion every Secular worker who declines to lay down his *toga virilis* for the President of the N. S. S. to wipe his boots on. Unfortunately for English Freethought, it has become indented in the minds of a large section of the community with Bradlaughism, Knowltonism, and sundry other unspeakable abominations and vulgarities.

"It is now, however, high time that all who would raise the Gospel of Man from the gutter-ways of social nastiness and the sanded-floor of the Cat-and-Ladle into a position befitting its true dignity, should enter a protest against the tactics and leadership of a man

who has put his hand to the Freethought plough and has looked back to political pastures; a man who has used Secularism as a steeping-stone to notoriety, and who has abused blasphemy as long as its abuse has been profitable; a man whose intolerant selfishness and narrow-minded egotism are a libel on freedom of thought and speech, even as his vulgarity is a libel on the dignity of the ministry whose high-priest he so unjustly claims to be."

The above extracts will show that there are those in the Freethought party who repudiate Mr Bradlaugh's leadership, upon the express grounds of dissidence from his materialistic Atheism and the prurience of his moral teachings.

I now draw my biographical sketch to a close. It has far exceeded the limits I had at the outset laid down for myself; and yet there is much which merited a fuller treatment, while some subjects have scarcely been referred to, especially the particulars in connection with the "Naples Oil and Colour Company," and similar speculative "Companies," the lawsuit with Mr Charles Watts, the trial of Mr G. W. Foote, and the cruel treatment of the Rev. Dr Sexton, etc. The details that are here lacking I may add in a subsequent edition. Upon the whole, I think it will be recognised that the work is not altogether without proportion, perspective, and firmness, and clearness of outline. Only, one merit I can unconditionally claim for my performance: I have spared no pains to verify, by public documents, and every reliable source at my disposal, every fact I have stated, and not to place upon any hypothesis whatever a deduction it could not fairly support. I have designedly given less space to Mr

Bradlaugh's latter than to his earlier career. I recognised that while it would be difficult if not impossible for the public to get at his antecedents while he was yet enveloped in more or less complete obscurity—since he has begun to bulk largely in the public eye his career has been patent to all who may have cared to interest themselves in it; and I have, accordingly, contented myself with giving a mere epitome. I should have left the public to judge of Mr Bradlaugh simply from the date on which he forced himself prominently upon public attention, had it not seemed to me well that his present should be rendered more intelligible from being brought out in relief against the background of his past.

THE END.

ADDENDUM.

IN the concluding sentences of this work it is promised that in a subsequent edition of the "Life" Mr Bradlaugh's latter-day career, and his connection with certain speculative Companies and private individuals, will receive considerable attention.

Seeing Mr Bradlaugh has served a writ for alleged libel, I will not at this juncture unwarrantably enlarge upon the subject-matter of the Biography. Here my sole object is to acquaint the reader of Mr Bradlaugh's tactics on an occasion when "Antipas F. D.," the late editor of the *Beaconsfield Standard*, published in a scathing biographical sketch, entitled "Bradlaugh Unveiled," that Mr Bradlaugh teaches: 1. That chastity is a crime; 2. That unbridled sensuality is a virtue; 3. That the law of nature commands the constant exercise of the procreative functions, etc. These charges were made against Mr Bradlaugh in the *Beaconsfield Standard* of 24th October 1885. On the 28th of October, Mr Bradlaugh sent a letter to the directors of the *Beaconsfield Standard*, demanding an apology, and that fifty pounds should be paid to the funds of St Thomas's Hospital. A copy of the letter is to be found on page 338. In answer to Mr Bradlaugh's letter, "Antipas F. D." reprinted, on 7th November 1885, all

the statements against Mr Bradlaugh which appeared on 24th October, along with his letter of 28th October, the following note by the editor of the *Beaconsfield Standard*, James Martain ("Antipas F. D."),* and a long letter signed "An Old Freethinker." Although all the essential points of the "Old Freethinker's" letter are already incorporated in the Biography, I produce it here *in extenso*.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P., FREE LOVE, AND "ANIMAL
LICENCE."

To the Editor of the "Beaconsfield Standard."

SIR,—As an ancient Freethinker who stands aloof from modern Agnosticism, let me thank you for your exposure of the vile principles with which the name of Mr Bradlaugh has become identified. Twenty years ago, when I saw the once proud banner of Freethought dragged through the gutter by the paid advocates of a vicious book, I withdrew from the ranks of the Secular party, of which I was a member, as author, advocate, and supporter, before Mr Bradlaugh was known as a representative Atheist when I gave ten years of my youth to disseminating what I considered then were anti-theological verities. I served under the leadership of Mr George Jacob Holyoake and Mr Robert Cooper, two men who were an honour to any cause, and whose moral characters were impervious to slander. In the columns of the *Reasoner* or the *Investigator*, no man or woman had cause to blush who read the details of a propaganda which aimed at purity of mind as well as freedom of opinion. Thomas Cooper

* A cursory glance at the book will serve to show whether or not we have made "foundationless allegations" against the would-be member for Northampton. We are always ready to apologise for errors when pointed out, either against persons or principle; but in this case, Mr Bradlaugh must excuse us from falling in with the suggestions of his letter, as we believe we have committed no error, much less uttered a libel, but simply done our duty, as all Englishmen should. We therefore prefer to enrich the world with the truth rather than St Thomas's Hospital with our funds. We have received a very large number of letters, one of which we print herewith, and which is more than an answer to Mr Bradlaugh's epistle.

went over to the religious body from which he sprung before he had written his name in history as the author of the *Purgatory of Suicides*, a prison rhyme, written during his two years incarceration in Stafford gaol for sedition (such as is now every day uttered with impunity by Mr Chamberlain), after the most brilliant defence in political history, when he, a poor cobbler and Chartist poet, stood eight days before Sir William Follett, speaking in defence of Chartism. He stayed with the Freethinkers until a section of them made it impossible for a decent man to continue in their midst, by advocating the doctrines of Knowltonism, and he left them in disgust. I recollect in after years Thomas Cooper telling me that George Jacob Holyoake was a moral man, and their difference in opinion made it a pleasure to meet one another; but he said, "I cannot tolerate infidel lecturers." Amongst these were Charles Southwell, the record of whose life is a tale of lecherous licence, and "Dr" S——, who was the exhibitor of an anatomical museum. There was a tendency to vice which made others fly into obscurity.

I recollect the time when "Iconoclast" stepped into the ranks. I know his antecedents as a lawyer's clerk, and in whose names he practised as a solicitor. In the biographies published by the instruments of this gentleman—I will not say his dupes, as that would imply a simplicity of intellect which I will not suppose them guilty—I find no items of his dealings with that distinguished member of the legal profession, Mr Montague Leveson, who was more fortunate in his departure from England than his relative, Madame Rachael, though doubtless with equal grounds for his speedy departure.

A history of the dealings of "Iconoclast" with Mr Montague Leveson might explain how it was that the legal ambition of Mr Bradlaugh was never gratified by solicitorial honours, and why he would never ask for admission to the Law Society. Perhaps, also his connection with Mr Harvey, a solicitor of Moorgate Street, might be of some service if told by a neutral writer. Mr Harvey was a gentleman who had two misfortunes in life—he was the owner of the Tal-y-sarn Slate Quarries, and the employer of a sharp lawyer's clerk, of the name of Mr Charles Bradlaugh. The master got lodged in Whitecross Street on account of his being rendered liable for debts, which, as a solicitor, he was obliged to adopt; and when he got in Whitecross Street, he was sufficiently malicious to say that his clerk kept him there. Doubtless this was a false imputation. The

late lamented Mr Pecksniff had similar charges laid at his door, but his overwhelming love for human nature made him pity the libellers. Mr Harvey's clerk was superior in his magnanimity to Mr Pecksniff—HE certainly was not the Shylock who lodged a detainer with the Sheriff of Middlesex to keep his father there. This young gentleman, Mr Harvey's son, must have been grievously mistaken when, taking pattern of Jeanie Deans, he *walked* near 300 miles from the Tallysarn homestead until he arrived at Elysium Villa, Tottenham, in his search for the quondam clerk, to implore him to release his father and—render an account. When poor Mr Hooper, who kept the "Coffee-house" Beehive Passage, Leadenhall Market, heard of the charges against his clever son-in-law, did he not say that he would have been better satisfied if "his Susan" had kept her place as housemaid in Canonbury Square? But "Iconoclast" grew ambitious. His time was drawing near. There was a book in course of publication which would make him king of the infidels, and land him in the House of Commons. I recollect well the appearance of this book, and the sensation it caused amongst the Freethinkers of the day. It was offered to the *Reasoner*, but George Jacob Holyoake would not notice the unclean thing. Doubtless he thought, as the biographer of Richard Carlile, that the "Every Woman's Book" had left its stain upon the Freethinkers who joined Robert Owen in the Socialist movement, and had caused the friend of this great philanthropist, Lord Brougham, to rise in his defence when the Bishop of Exeter denounced the supposed immoral tendencies in the House of Lords, upon the occasion when Robert Owen was presented at Court.

At last, when "Sexual, Physical, and Natural Religion" was ready, and before its issue to the public, the "advance sheets" were forwarded to the press. I saw the first "copy" sent to the two Freethought journals, the *Reasoner* and the *Investigator*. The editor of the latter was a very young man, not twenty-one years of age, and who shortly afterwards was associated with "Iconoclast" and John Watts in the issue of "Half-hours with the Freethinkers." He fell into the trap, and wrote a glowing notice of the book, which has since been elevated to popularity as the Bible of the Brothel, with Mr Charles Bradlaugh as reigning *Pontifex Maximus*. This editor was to be excused. He had merely read the political pages, and was not aware that it was intended to be the advertisement of nameless quack doctors, whose *specialities* are an opprobrium to the bye-

places of our great cities. This modicum of praise was sufficient to set it a-going. A review quoted from the moral *Dispatch* and the *Investigator* gave an impetus to its sale amongst Freethinkers, but not without warning. In every place where George Jacob Holyoake travelled on his lecturing tours, he told his disciples—and many of them have since become the leading men of the age in England—that they must spurn the unclean thing.

On the first appearance of an article in its favour in the *Investigator*, Robert Cooper wrote to his successor and implored him to reconsider his views, and if he could not do so, then to be silent on such a dangerous subject. He was young and inexperienced. In process of time "Iconoclast" held the editorial reins of the *Investigator*, and after a year transferred its contributions to the *National Reformer*. Simultaneous with Mr Bradlaugh assuming the proprietorship of this paper, he became the paid advocate of the opinions of the most infamous book of our age. I do not say that Mr Bradlaugh received a weekly salary, but I do say that both he and Mr Truelove, its publisher, became the recipients of the charity of "G. R.," the anonymous author. It began with £1, £2, £10, £20, and then £100 gifts—in proportion as the money came in, Mr Bradlaugh made the book the subject of his crusade in the provinces. Mr Joseph Barker, a religious turncoat, who turned his coat twice, but who was a moral man, repudiated its doctrines. He retired from the Freethought platform because of the sudden immorality of the leading infidels. There was a split over his book, but Mr C. Bradlaugh became its enthusiastic advocate—as long as the money lasted. The effect was disastrous in the party. In Sheffield, Halifax, Newcastle, and Huddersfield, *Free Love* became the rage, after "Iconoclast's" lectures. Men who had hitherto been moral suddenly kept mistresses, when they were under no danger of bringing families into the world. Vice was made free of responsibility. Old wives were exchanged for young concubines. Sometimes a Freethinker would keep a private seraglio at home. Mr Bradlaugh knows that houses where he used to visit at Sheffield were morally changed when the new religion was adopted by Freethinkers.

The other day I was speaking with a gentleman having a moral reputation second to none in Great Britain. He and I had known many Secularists when we were young together. We counted up nearly twenty men who had been especially prominent for ability.

As we went through the list, we found sixteen had come to grief, and the remaining four, who are still immaculate Freethinkers, owe their moral superiority to their previous training as Christians.

I will not go into the sanctity of private life, but I will say that since this book of morals was introduced, a decent man hesitates at being in company with disciples of Mr Bradlaugh.

What does the book teach? Why, that virtue is a sham, that man's duty is to commit vice, that seduction is a necessary operation of youth, and that the only thing to guard against is being *found out*; it teaches that sensual pleasures should be the object of daily pursuit, and that our national disease of consumption in the female proceeds from our insane ideas of female virtue. The object, then, for which a young man is to live is, according to the doctrines of the Bible of the Brothel, which Mr Bradlaugh's disciples vaunt as the foundation of political and social wisdom, to seduce women in a scientific way so as no conception can follow. If this end be gained, then the human instincts are gratified, and it is a sublime duty to promote prostitution as a branch of national morals; and so as to combine precept with practice, the law of population, according to Malthus, is laid down along with medical receipts how to cure diseases caught in a brothel. Imbued with those doctrines, monsters of iniquities parade our streets, and the infamous "Minotaurs" of the *Pall Mall Gazette* are daily destroying our young girls, upon the basis of Mr Bradlaugh's bible, which is the text-book, as it has been the exchequer bank, of Mr Charles Bradlaugh.

What are the facts? To a man it says, gratify your lust, but do not increase the population. In France the population has been stationary for two generations. In Germany it doubles itself in thirty years. The increase of population means diminution of work, or "the pressure of population on the means of subsistence," therefore preach it in the factory where female labour is employed; that there is a positive virtue in seducing or being seduced, and the art, as expounded under the bible patronised by Mr Bradlaugh, will teach the females to escape maternity. Under these circumstances, is it likely that in factories where five hundred females are employed virtue will be at a premium?

If you tell every servant girl that she may commit sin in a way to avoid all disagreeable consequences, is it likely that our domestics will turn out virtuous wives? Is it not entering into an unholy alliance with prostitution? Is it not reviving the worship of the

goddess Circe, or the infamies which some ancient cults worshipped at the Cyprian shrine of Venus?

This is what Freethought has come to under the *régime* of Charles Bradlaugh. The other day I saw a gang of his disciples breaking up a public meeting. There were perhaps a dozen decent men out of two hundred of as cut-throat a mob as ever was led by Marat or Herbert in the age of the *SANS CULOTTES*—I never saw a more villainous crew. With the mark of the beast on their brows, with sunken eyes, blasphemous tongues, and Revolution in their countenance, they yelled at the order of their fugleman, who appeared to be one of the scum of the Continent, who had no right to interfere with English politics. How different from the men who used to sit at the feet of Mr Cooper—Freethinkers who taught men logic by which they could reason their way into liberty of thought.

In conclusion, I call upon all who value justice in man and virtue in women to separate themselves from a leader who teaches moral pollution from a book which is alleged by its disciples to be superior to the Gospel.—I am, Sir,

AN OLD FREETHINKER.

Instead of furnishing the apology demanded by the vociferating Infidel, the semi-Infidel crank "Antipas F. D.," who had, for reasons I forbear to mention, been expelled Mr Spurgeon's hell-fire college, and who now poses as ringleader of a mad sect, the Nazarenes, obtained an audience for his "Bradlaugh Unveiled" through the columns of the *Brixton News* and *Church and State*. "Antipas F. D." was not to be cowed by the Bobadil valour and bluster of the "friend" of the "horny-handed sons of toil," and the "champion" of the freedom of the press. Mr Bradlaugh remembered that "Antipas F. D." wrote and published a "Fruits of Philosophy" which had brought about their meeting at the Mansion House, and elsewhere, to deliver speeches, eulogising their respective "Fruits," and emphasising their respective claims to the copyright. Everyone knows the nature of the contents of Mr Bradlaugh's "Fruits,"

while no person has succeeded in understanding "Antipas's" publication, even after his explaining that it is a philosophic and religious work. As the *real* publisher of "Antipas's" "Fruits" may before long sit in the House of Commons in his would-be capacity as member for East Worcestershire, Mr Bradlaugh will, doubtless, be glad to learn that the gentleman to whom he is indebted for surreptitious publishing is no other than Mr Arthur James Dadson, who has figured as "James & Co.," "Cox & Co.," and who has adopted various *aliases* in the advertising of his quack nostrums. The three worthies, the Infidel braggart, the semi-Infidel crank, and the quack medicine vendor, with the *aliases*, presumably know sufficient about each other's business to determine them to keep apart.

It is because it has appeared to me that I did not give sufficient prominence to the utter discomfiture of Mr Bradlaugh by "Antipas F. D.," that I have here dealt with the matter more in detail. After this, what chance have I that Mr Bradlaugh will go on with the action of which his writ is the earnest? * Believing in the righteousness of my cause, I am desirous that Her Majesty's High Court of Justice should effectively finish what I have so imperfectly begun.

C. R. M.

* It is only because the exposure which Mr Bradlaugh is subjected to in my book is as nothing to the exposure to which he will be subjected if he seek the arbitrament of the courts, that I am anxious he should prosecute me.

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